LAHORE NAMA

لاہور نامہ

Santosh Kumar

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LAHORE NAMA

Presented to
Janab Manzur Ahmed
with high regards
Santosh Kumar
10.01.2014
Code
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LAHORE NAMA

January, 2002

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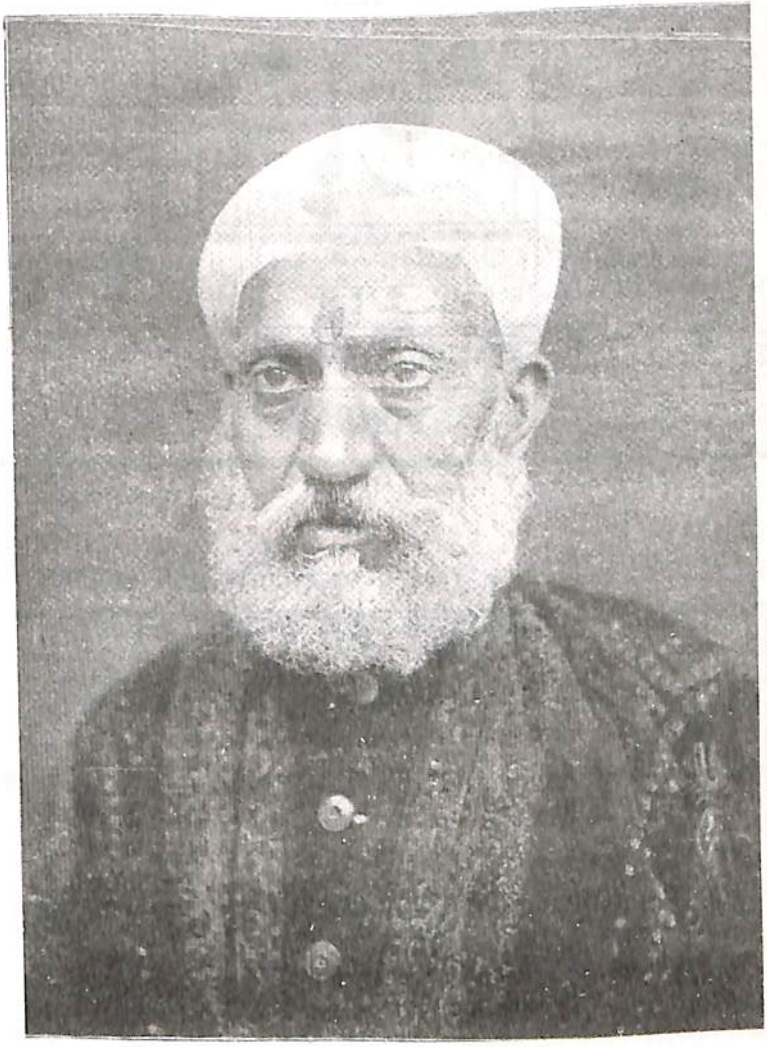
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of my grand father Pandit Mukund Ram, who pioneered the advent of modern journalism in Lahore, in the second half of the 19th century.



PANDIT MUKUND RAM,
of Kashmir
1831 - 1897

Founder of the "Mittra Vilasa Press" and "Akhbar-i-Am" of Lahore

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Newspapers founded by Pandit Mukund Ram

THE
AKHBAR - I - AM.
LAHORE.

اخبار عام

لاہور - ۱۹ - نومبر سنہ ۱۸۸۱
روز شنبہ

No. 28 | NOVEMBER 19, 1881. SATURDAY. | Vol. XI.

قواعد

۱- یہ اخبار ہفتہ میں دو بار شنبہ کو اور چہارشنبہ کو شائع ہوتا ہے

۲- خریداران کو چاہیے کہ شرح قیمت پر غور کریں اور عمل کریں ۔

۳- خریداران کی بدلی ہونیوالی ہو تو چاہیے کہ اپنے پورا نام پتہ ہمیں بھیجیں اگر اخبار اسی جگہ پہونچ جایا کرے گا

۴- اشتہارات کا واسطے سطر مقرر ہے اور سطر سے مراد کالم کی سطر ہے

۵- ہر قسم کی کتاب وغیرہ سامان بکتا ہے نرخ دی جاتی ہے

ہر قیمت اخبار عام
لاہور میں دو بار شائع ہوتا ہے

	ڈاک بیرون		چندے		
	چھ مہینوں	سہ مہینوں	چھ مہینوں	سہ مہینوں	
ہمراہ					
سالانہ	۳ر	۲ر	۱ر	۱ر	۸ر
سالانہ	عہ	عہ	عہ	عہ	عہ

بابت دینے والوں سے کچھ لیا جاویگا

میعاد پیشگی

سال بھر کو اسطرح تین ماہ شش ماہ واسطے ایک ماہ اور باقی عرصہ کے واسطے

مگر یاد رہے کہ اگر خریداران نے قیمت درخواست کے ساتھ بھیجی ہوگی ورنہ تعمیل نا ممکن

"जननीजन्मभूमिश्चस्वर्गादपिगरीयसी"

THE MITTRA VILASA LAHOR

मित्र विलास
लाहौर

"सत्यमेवजयते नानृतम्"

इसपत्रका मूल्य शहरमें
वार्षिक अग्रिम ॥)
६ मासिक
मासिक ६)
प्रति
वार्षिक
६ मासिक
मासिक
प्रति

इसपत्रका मूल्य डाकमें
वार्षिक अग्रिम ३)
६ मासिक
मासिक
प्रति
वार्षिक
६ मासिक
मासिक
प्रति

सोमवार ५ जुलाई सन १८८०

संख्या ४१

Vol. III. | MONDAY :- JULY 5, 1880. | No. 49.

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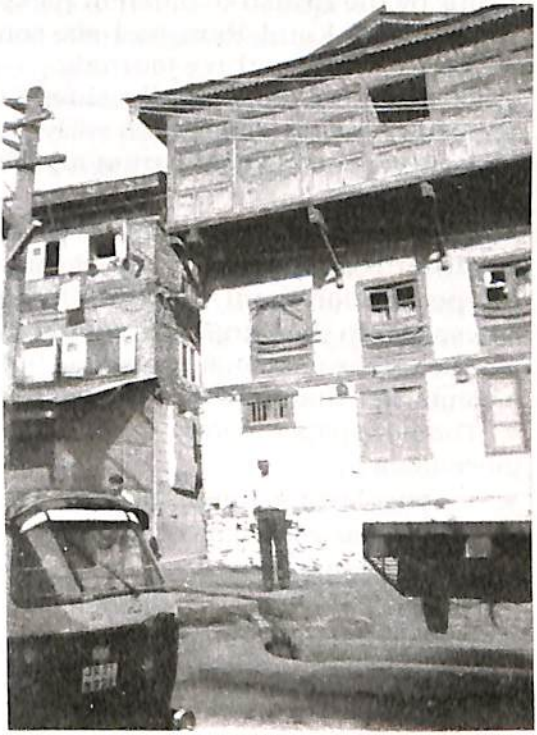
PREFACE

1

I belong to a Kashmiri Pandit family which played a pioneering role in the field of journalism in the Punjab during the second half of the 19th century. My grandfather Pandit Mukund Ram left his ancestral home situated in an area called 'Gund Ahalmar'(now Nai Sarak), Gawa Kadal, Srinagar, with a group of friends and came to Lahore in 1848. At that time he was 17 years old.

It was a bold decision on his part to leave home at such a young age, especially when his father Pandit Daya Ram had become a *sadhu* when he was a baby. His mother also passed away as soon as he began to walk. Thus, at such an early age Pandit Mukund Ram was left an orphan.

A biography of Pandit Mukund Ram (1831-1897) written by his son Kanahya Lal in the last decade of the 19th century says: "He led a marvellous life". The biography which became extinct in India, was traced to the British



The author, standing in front of his more than 200 year old ancestral house in Srinagar, in September, 1999. With the *enmasse* migration of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir the whole area looks deserted.

---

i NAI SADAK
Gaw Kadal

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Museum, London, in the second half of the 20th century. The copy has a stamp 'British Museum, 28th July, 1899' Indian Copy Right.

The biography says that Pandit Mukund Ram was the founder of the *Mittra Vilasa* Press in Lahore in 1861. The press helped Pandit Mukund Ram to publish three newspapers - *Akhbar-i-Am* in Urdu, Arjuna in English and *Mittra Vilasa* in Hindi and some other journals. Mittra Vilasa was the first Hindi journal in the Punjab. The newspaper *Akhbar-i-Am* became famous throughout India for the influence it wielded in building public opinion in the Punjab and other parts of India.

It was the only Indian newspaper of its kind which took up the cause of the Indians who were taken as indentured labour by the British to different parts of the world.

Pandit Mukund Ram had six sons, all of whom were connected with his three journals.

One of them Pandit Balkrishna Gurtu was my father. I also took up journalism at an early age in Lahore in 1945.

I have spent the best part of my life in Urdu and English journalism.

The *Akhbar-i-Am* started as a weekly in 1871 and became a daily in 1889. In those times it was a very difficult task to get permission from the British Government to start a newspaper in the Punjab. Pandit Mukund Ram was chosen to take up the challenging task of starting the newspaper by a committee that had been formed earlier for this purpose.

The newspaper *Akhbar-i-Am* blazed a new trail in Urdu journalism by :

- concentrating on publishing items of news from India and many foreign countries.
- appointing its own correspondents in Britain, China and some African countries.
- Being the first to publish labour news involving grievances of the seamen with the British Shipping Corporation.
- Being the first to highlight the atrocities committed by the British on Indian indentured labour to some African countries like Uganda.
- encompassing developments in "One Liners". A one liner on the economic exploitation of India by the British

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Government said, "*Yakam Mai se 31 October (1881) tak 4 crore 68 lakh pounds sterling Hind se Vilayat gaye*". i.e. From 1 May to 31 October (1881), a sum of 4 crore 68 lakh pound sterling was sent from India to England. Issue Volume XI No 87 dated 19 November 1881.

Another one liner of international news in the same issue said "*Ameer-e-Bukhara ke ilaaj ke liye Russi government ne do doctor bheje*". The Russian Government has sent two doctors to treat the Ameer of Bukhara.

Another one liner said, "*fourteen lakh rupai ka tambakoo England bheja gaya*" Rs. 14 lakh worth of tobacco was exported to England.

- Keeping the price of the newspaper at one 5 gr. copper paisa so that the common people could buy it. The paisa then was $^{1}/_{64}$th part of a 10 gr. silver rupee.
- Simplifying the Urdu language so that it could be closer to the common people.
- Carrying very bold editorials on the then British Government's move to restrict the freedom of the press.
- In an editorial on the amendment to the Law of Sedition in the issue of 19 February 1898, it said, "the government by further tightening the screw of law is becoming a prisoner of its own short sightedness."

I am proud of this heritage; I feel great pride in the strength of the convictions my father, my uncles and my grand father carried. To them I owe this ability to speak, to write and to believe in the universal brotherhood of man.

Extracts from articles are appended.

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Date : 01.01.2002

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Akhbar-i-Am
4 November, 1897

Editorial

Freedom of Press

The condition of the freedom of the press is deteriorating. On the one hand, in name the press is free but on the other hand there lurks the doubt that the press is capable of creating disaffection against the government. If all this is true then the better course is to gag the press, once for all!

We are not ill-disposed towards the government. We only wish to enjoy the privilege of the free press. We would like to know as to what turmoil has been caused by the Free Press that the demand is being raised to arrest and convict journalists and destroy this or that newspaper. God alone knows as to why such actions are being contemplated.

Let us take the case of the trial of Mr. Tilak (Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak) and try to make the government understand the meanings of our writings. The proceedings of this case are full of misunderstandings.

In reporting the daily proceedings of this case, we have deliberately kept the government case in view and we accepted the official translation and during the hearings we wrote not a word that smacked of opposition. But what can the government do when in all sensitive matters, the government's case seems undone. How will the government conceal the fact that irrelevant matters have been clubbed together? How will this fact be concealed that all the Indian members of the Jury consider the accused as innocent and yet the accused has been convicted on the opinion of strangers. How will this fact be concealed that the judge as well as the jurors are ignorant of the language (Marathi) in which Tilak's articles were published. Even then the sentence of six years has been passed against Tilak.

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It is apparent that the closure of the newspapers will not remove the disaffection of the people against the government.

Public opinion in India was infuriated by the unjust sentence passed against Tilak. A call was given for collecting funds to file an appeal against the court's judgement in the Privy Council in London. The people of India despite their poverty donated whole-heartedly to meet the expenses for filing the appeal. Rs.10,000/- were collected in Bombay, while Bengal also collected the same amount. The rest of the money came from other parts of India, Deccan and Berar, Nagpur, Gujarat, Lahore and Malwa. We have learnt that among the donors were not only the educated well-to-do Indians but also the illiterate villagers.

For the government this response of the people is a great setback.

***

Akhbar-i-Am
8 November, 1897

A Report

Swami Vivekanand Visits Sialkot

Shri D.C. Netar reports from Sialkot:

Swamiji who had gone to the Jammu and Kashmir State at the invitation of the Maharaja, reached Sialkot on 31 October from Jammu.

The same evening Swamiji addressed a public meeting in English for three hours. Every now and then he was lustily cheered by the large audience.

On 2 November, Swamiji again addressed a meeting in the same ancient city of Sialkot. This time he spoke in Hindustani for the benefit of the masses i.e. who do not understand English.

The burden of his speech was that we Indians are passing through a period of ignorance and we need educational institutions more than temples.

Swamiji added, 'Even if somebody becomes a graduate or a post-graduate or becomes a barrister or joins civil service but does not contribute to the progress of India then such a man's academic achievements are of no use or benefit'.

***

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Akhbar-i-Am
4 November, 1897

Editorial

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***

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Akhbar-i-Am
9 November, 1897

A Report

Cost of Frontier Policy

This report should open the eyes of the readers that till date, the Government of India has spent 71 crores and 50 lakh rupees on carrying out its Frontier Policy, against Afghanistan.

According to the Journal "Capital" (of London), "During the last 22 years, India's debt has increased by 105 crores, there was an increase of 10 crores in defence expenditure. On this 105 crores, the Government had to pay an interest of Rs.5 crores.

***

Akhbar-i-Am
9 November, 1897

Editorial

Opposing the Teaching of History

Our contemporary English Weekly "Arjuna", published from Lahore, reports that time was when the (London) Times views were considered correct and authoritative in India. But the times have changed. And the regret is that this journal writes such a thing which shows that it possesses very little information about India. The criticism that the daily carries about Indian affairs betrays its complete misunderstanding. This paper has taken a U turn and now, in place of creditworthy articles, it is carrying vulgar and shameful reports.

For instance, Reuters has reported that the 'Times' has carried an article in its 11 October 1897 issue, opposing the teaching of history in schools and colleges in India. The said article adds that "We are reaping what we had sown and soon we will be tasting the bitter fruit of our actions". We are surprised as to why teaching of history is being opposed. The compilers of history are themselves our rulers. It is history prepared by the British themselves, that is taught to us. And where is the history of real facts that should be taught to us? Our heroes have been described as dogs and thieves and we have to accept it.

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It is a matter of shame that we have lost taste of our own history. We do not even remember the names of the compilers of our ancient history. The alien historians have taught us not to believe in our traditions. Of course, you can seek the veracity of this statement from the views expressed by Madam Blavatsky and Mrs. Annie Besant.

The editorial continued and emphasized "When this is the state of history then any book dealing with our ancient heroes is most welcome. Poets and historians alone can rejuvenate our dead souls."

"It is a matter of shame that in the present times there is not a single Indian historian. Lt. Col. Todd records in his 'Annals of Rajasthan', "Every plain in Rajasthan is the plain of Thermopylae and this land (of Rajasthan) has produced such warriors and dare-devils and have registered such achievements before which the historic events of Rome and Greece have no resemblance."

"We are in need of such histories and we hereby refer to the two books which have been sent to us for review. One is the 'Biography of Shri Shivaji' and the other 'The Events in the Life of Guru Tegh Bahadur', first book is in Urdu and the other in English. The first is authored by our countryman, Lala Lajpat Rai while the other does not carry the name of the author.

These books contain no new material. Most parts are translations and also carry footnotes and explanations. However, the intention of writing these books is praiseworthy".

***

Akhbar-i-Am

10 November, 1897

A Report

Swami Vivekanand's First Lecture in Lahore

From Jammu, Swami Vivekanand reached Lahore last thursday and as desired by the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir, his stay was arranged in the *Haveli* Dhyan Singh. Swamiji is accompanied by one American and two Indian disciples. (The American also functions as a stenographer for recording Swamiji's speeches in English language). During mornings and evenings huge crowds of admirers are seen at

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his residence. On saturday evening, he was to speak on "Important questions before us". The programme of the meeting was given wide publicity. Rai Bahadur Pratul Chandra Chatterji, Judge of the Chief Court was to preside over the function. The venue of the public meeting was the huge *haveli*.

The crowd assembled there was so large that no body could hazard a guess about the number of people. The crowd had assembled in a hall which had the seating capacity of six thousand and the number of people who tried to seek entry was so enormous that it became difficult to breathe there.

The report adds: In fact, one felt small and ashamed at the lack of proper arrangements.

The report ends:

And the result of all this was that Swamiji could not address the meeting. The public had to disperse.

***

Akhbar-i-Am

10 November, 1897

(The same day the report of meeting appeared)

Editorial

Swami Vivekanand's First Lecture in Lahore

Swami Vivekanand has visited Lahore and we hope that he will never forget this visit.

Swamiji's name and his thoughts have been the talk of the town. The citizens of Lahore were anxiously waiting for a *darshan* of the Swami whose presentation of the essence of Indian religion i.e. *Vedanta Shastra* has captivated the minds of the people of the West.

Even though Swamiji could not address the meeting, the overwhelming response of the people proved his great popularity amongst the people of Punjab.

The fact is that if we understand the *Vedanta Shastra* well, then followers of all religions of India – Brahmo, Arya, Khalsa – and Hindus, Christians and Muslims and others - can live together on this ancient and natural platform of India and thereby patriotism can be saved / maintained / preserved without hurting the sensibilities of any religious community.

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Differences in religion and religious thoughts are natural but above all this is patriotism. And in what better way can patriotism be demonstrated than by safeguarding and defending the honour of India and its achievements in the spheres of sciences, arts and the ethics?

Swamiji's views had a magnetic effect on the minds of the people. His thoughts are not directed towards any particular community or society but may prove meaningful for all.

***

Akhbar-i-Am

11 November, 1897

Editorial on Spain and Cuba:

For the peace loving people of the world, it would be of interest to note that the possibilities of peace and unity between Spain and Cuba are brightening. The coming into power of the Liberals in Spain may prove beneficial for both Spain as well as Cuba.

The Liberal Party has made a good proclamation proposing to grant rights to Cuban people equal to those being enjoyed by the Spanish citizens. If this proposal is carried out, then that country would be spared of further civil wars. However, if the proclamation of Spain proves to be a dead letter like the proclamation of Queen Victoria about India in 1858, then surely, it would be difficult to maintain peace in Cuba.

The editorial goes on to say that "Cuba is not India (even Egypt is more fortunate than India because of its proximity with the enlightened Europe) and Cuba is nearer to the American people who have already demonstrated how they won their freedom from England (in their war of independence in 1776).

***

Akhbar-i-Am

13 November, 1897

Akhbar-i-Am's correspondent writes from Glasgow, Scotland, in the issue of 13 November, 1897.

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In a despatch captioned "*Gore Paadrion Ko*' (To the white missionaries in India).

India is a country where guests are honoured and you (the white missionaries in India) are also, in a way, our guests. Apparently, your work is good. However, when we view it from a moral, spiritual or patriotic angle, we are forced to make a mention of what you are doing in India. Day and night we pray that the *paadrees* may pay attention to culture and morality so that we need not chastise them.

However, we would advise:

1. The *paadrees* should love not only the rulers (British) but also the ruled (the people of India);
2. They should not emphasize differences of caste and social customs;
3. They should encourage inter-marriages between the white and black chrisuans;
4. The salary of the Indian *paadree* should be the same as that of the white one;
5. They should recall incompetent and unworthy *firangee paadrees* from serving in India; and
6. The white *paadrees* in India should refrain from interfering in India's political and social affairs.

***

Akhbar-i-Am
14 February, 1898

A Report

Captains' Unity

British Indian Steam Navigation Company's dispute with its ship officers is continuing. Company's agent Sir James MacCay is insisting that the Guild set up by the Captains to defend their interests be dissolved. Also, even after the dissolution of the Guild, all the agitators would not necessarily be reinstated. This condition of the management has destroyed the chances of reconciliation. Also, the stand and the stance of the management has created a situation where the sympathies of the public have grown with the agitators. And we are sure that those who have resigned and are presently unemployed, will receive enough monetary help from the public at large, to sustain their struggle and carry on with their demands.

***

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Akhbar-i-Am
16 February, 1898

Editorial

The Hollowness of the Frontier Policy

Had the Government of India known of the rumours making rounds in this border province of Punjab called North West Frontier Province, regarding the consequences of the border wars between the British rulers in India and Afghanistan, we are sure that the Government would never have rested till the border tribals had been brought to their knees or consider the public disloyal/distrustful.

However, the fact remains that if there is one question in the world, about which the Government has faced strong criticism then it is the question of Frontier Policy. The secret of the failure of the frontier policy is that in England, it has been made a case of Liberal versus the Conservative political parties. Both the parties are dealing with the interests of impoverished India in a heartless manner.

We are not saying that the Liberals and the Conservatives are incompetent when they are already running a great empire, but what we wish to say is: What can they do when they are ignorant of local conditions and they are callous about the expenditure involved in the expeditions against Afghanistan.

The editorial continues, 'Were the expenses to be borne by the British treasury, we are sure, this sort of extravagance would not have been tolerated. Here, you indulge in military skirmishes in the border area and burn a few crores of rupees. Then you retreat. Again, you despatch another expedition and waste a few crores of Indian money and again order "About Turn".

On both sides of the border are the Afghans or *Ameer-e-Afghanistan* and the present exercise means that some money reaches the Pathans, some is paid to contractors and to transporters and the rest is spent on political parleys. In the ultimate analysis, what we find is that our wealth has been frittered away and we receive injuries in the bargain.

How sad it is that we do not find a single wise person who could have assessed the situation from the Indian point of view.

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According to a conservative estimate, the Government during the last fifty years has spent fifty crores on these fruitless military expeditions.

If the objective of the Frontier Policy had been to deter Russia then one should understand that our relations with the frontier tribes have worsened. We do appreciate the policy that means cultivating friendship with the tribes. Had the tribes enjoyed autonomy and been friendly to us, it would have been fruitful. Then there would have been no need to develop relations with Afghanistan. The present position is like that of the Maharaja of Kashmir who is loyal, even then the government wants to cross through Kashmir and set up a British political agency in Gilgit in northern Kashmir.

Perhaps the British Government wanted to prove to the frontier people that it wanted to develop relations with Afghanistan but the way the relations are being developed, is not bringing any credit to the British rulers in India.

***

Akhbar-i-Am
19 February 1898

Editorial

Law of Sedition

The amendment to this law is likely to be introduced in the meeting of the Indian Constitution Making Council and soon we will come to know whether the public opinion of this country has had any effect on the government or in this matter also the government would prove to be unheeding.

We have thought over the amendment and the fact is that our mind is not satisfied at all that the Government, by amending the law, is acting to strengthen its own political power in India. On the contrary, the fact that emerges is that the Government is afraid of the press and fears that the press freedom would lead to disturbance of peace. There can be two reasons for this fear. Either the Government doubts the loyalty of the people or thinks that the persons running the press are not loyal to the Government. If the first is the reason then it

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would be a blot on the administration of British Government that even after its long rule in India it could not win the hearts of the people. The second reason would be all the more atrocious because it would mean that to serve the country is considered disloyalty to the Government.

The Government should understand that the existing law concerning the press is enough to deal with the situation. Under the circumstances the government by further tightening the screw of law is becoming a prisoner of its shortsightedness.

The British authorities have tried to justify the amendment by stating that they would bring the Sedition Law at par with the one existing in England. But the amendment tells a different tale.

In England, the punishment for this kind of sedition is two years imprisonment – simple not rigorous. There (in England) sedition has nothing to do with intention but the meanings of the words are taken cognizance of. For example, whosoever writes: Revolt, create disturbance, attack the government – is liable for conviction. Unlike here in India where meanings are derived from clippings of Indian newspapers scattered over fifty places and a ghost is created.

There in England the appointment of the jury is taken seriously and he alone can be a juror who is the countryman of the accused. In India a jury consists of both Englishmen and Indians.

Proposing amendment to the law of sedition, the British government in India, has kept this factor in view that "whatever be the fault, is of the newspapers and whatever be the virtue, it is of the government.

Without doubt the press publishes strong criticism of the government, which the later considers sedition. The first reason for strong criticism is the campaign of denigration of India carried out by the Englishmen in India in the English press which is fully owned by them. The second reason are the acts of tyranny perpetrated by the British officers.

If Viceroy Lord Lytton listens to us then let him not employ pressure tactics against the press, but rely upon dialogue and trust.

***

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Akhbar-i-Am
13 December, 1902

A Report

Kaisar of Germany and the Socialists

Message received by telegramme in Lahore

The severe criticism and outspokenness of the Socialist members in the German Parliament during discussion on the Tariff Bill, has incensed the Kaisar of Germany. Kaisar William arrived at Bresla on 5 December and in reply to an address of welcome accorded by the merchants, took the Socialists to task. He warned the artisans against the machhinations of the Socialists. "By their attacks against the capitalists they are enslaving you. Never accept their leadership", he exhorted.

However, according to further reports just received Kaisar's speech has created sensation in the whole of Germany. Men of opinion hold the view that Kaisar William by making this a personal war against the Socialists has given a go-bye to reason and wisdom. The German Socialist Party is very strong and powerful and the king can do nothing to harm it. The reasoned men of opinion, therefore, regret that Kaisar William has not done the right thing.

***

Akhbar-i-Am
13 December 1902

A Report

Relations of *Ameer-e-Bukhara* with Russia

Reports from Central Asia indicate that *Ameer-e-Bukhara* Abdul Wahid Khan has a desire to perform Haj this year and he sought permission of the Russian Governor of Tashkent. Governor wrote back that this year there are many difficulties so the idea of performing Haj be dropped. Hejaz railway would be completed and become operational shortly. That would be the appropriate time to go to Mecca. This reply was not liked by the *Ameer*. As a matter of faith, he does not consider the difficulties of Haj as difficulties at all and being angry, he has directly sought the permission from St. Petersberg (the Russian capital). A reply is being awaited.

***

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Akhbar-i-Am
15 December, 1902

A Report

Subjugation of Somaliland with the help of Bombay Garrison

The British call the leader of the Somali people Mullah Abdulla, a madman. But the Mullah is the most sensible and dignified person in the whole area.

Earlier, the Mullah was an admirer of the British but the crude sermons of the British *paadrees* in Somaliland turned him into an enemy of the English.

As in China so in Somaliland, now called Somalia, the root cause of the present trouble are the missionary *paadrees* who in their public sermons, speak so harshly and so stupidly about the Prophet and the sacred beliefs of the followers of Islam that one and all muslims have begun to hate the Englishmen and want to breakaway from them. The Mullah has such an oratorial skill that the people of the neighbouring areas are all too ready to sacrifice their lives at his call.

A national of Austria, Karl Inger, who was living in Somaliland was friendly with the Mullah and in the present turmoil, he considers the partisans of the Mullah as completely guiltless and he holds the British responsible for the turmoil.

The people of Somaliland are fighting a defensive war. They harbour no ill- intention. They are convinced that God is on their side. He is testing their patience.

They have already repulsed three English attacks. Now the fourth expedition is being planned.

Notwithstanding, the days of Somali independence are numbered and it is believed that the coming campaign will put the Mullah's power to an end.

To provide military transport to the British forces, Bombay Garrison has been given the charge.

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The Editors - in - Chief of the 'Akhbar-i-Am'

Pandit Govind Sahai
1860-1913

Pandit Gopi Nath
1862 -1939

The Editor - in - Charge of the 'Akhbar-i-Am' for many years

Pandit Bal Krishna Gurtu
1880 - 1944

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The foreword of the Urdu Edition of Lahore Nama published in 1983

Shri Inder Kumar Gujral, former Prime Minister of India, wrote a foreword to the book in which he said:

The art of writing a travelogue is rather difficult. If the writer lacks microscopic sight, his impressions look superficial but if he gets lost in mere details, then the picture becomes blurred.

Santosh Kumar is a seasoned artist and he has provided charming proof of his dedication to his profession in his travelogue of Lahore and Karachi.

For our generation, the memories of Lahore and Karachi carry a special attraction. This gravity can only be felt, not described. The relationship with the place of birth is something full of sentiments but when history breaks the bonds and four decades pass by, then life feels as if something is a miss – a vacuum. This very attraction and this very vacuum aroused an irrepressible urge in Santosh to visit Lahore. Santosh Kumar's travelogue includes a deeply sentimental reference to the Brad-laugh Hall in Lahore. This hall was built by the Indian National Congress. For people of our age and for our elders who were part of India's freedom struggle, this place is remembered for the many turns in the politics, revolution, and our country's history. Looking back during the last century Charles Brad-laugh (1833-1891) was a sober and serious member of the British Parliament. In 1889, he introduced a bill in the House of Commons in London that a democratic constitution be enforced in India and the democratic institutions for India should be elected by the people of India. That was a big turn in Indian politics. The same year i.e. 1889, Brad-laugh came to Bombay to address the annual session of Congress. The Congress presidents of those days were open-minded and enlightened Englishmen. That session was presided over by William Wederburn. The citizens of Bombay accorded them a reception full of enthusiasm. After a few years this historic hall of Lahore was dedicated to Shri Brad-laugh. It is in this hall where we listened to the enlightened speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru.

When you think of the past, so many incidents come to mind. Hiren Mukerji, Dr. Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf, Mian Iftikhar-ud-din and the elder statesman Dr. Saif-

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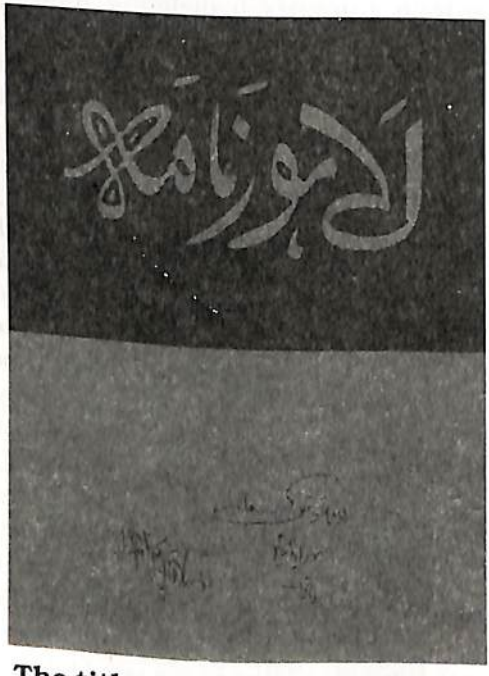
ud-din Kitchlew, all these names come to mind in the memory lane.

And then with a single blow, the course of India's history was changed. Of course, the dream was realised. But alongwith that, the country, the minds and the relationships were divided. Caravan after caravan, in larger and larger numbers, many a Santosh came on this side leaving Bradlaugh Hall, Gol Bagh and Lajpat Bhawan, behind.

The beauty of Santosh's travelogue is not just sentimental. He has with subtle sensitivity summed up the politics and the social knots and the struggle of today in Pakistan. His characters are live, speaking and thinking beings who don't feel greatness but helplessness in the flag marches of the army and they try to summon determination to change the course of history.

As a reader, I look upon the travelogue of Santosh Ji with admiration.

Inder Kumar Gujral



The title of Lahore Nama in Urdu was calligraphed by the well-known Pakistani artist Sadequain

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Impact of Lahore Nama on Mrs. Indira Gandhi

The first edition of Lahore Nama made such an impact that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent instructions to the Principal Information Officer of the Government of India to translate the Urdu edition of Lahore Nama into English for her perusal. The P.I.B. duly carried out the Prime Minister's instructions and an English rendering of Lahore-Nama was sent to her.

An Appreciation by Professor J.P. Gurtu, a Lahori who was educated in Punjab and was a well-known educationalist:

In a masterly manner, Santosh Kumar, draws a remarkable pen picture of the cordial reception which he received everywhere in Pakistan. On reading his book one can hardly believe that there are any insurmountable hurdles in our reconciliation.

And lastly, I would like to add:

Wisemen and wise nations, particularly India and Pakistan, should profit by their mistakes. Humility is the beginning of wisdom; for progress starts with the thought that perhaps one might oneself be mistaken. I like, admire and applaud Santosh's courage of conviction, his deep understanding of what he is writing about, his openness of mind, his candour, his complete self-detachment. That is why, I would more than recommend this travelogue. I would implore everyone especially a typical Lahori like myself, capable of arriving at an independent and unbiased judgement, to minutely read this book.

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About the Author

Santosh Kumar

- Born in Lahore on 23 June, 1927.
- Joined journalism in 1945, after dismissal from service for organising a strike in a British Company, which he was serving, against the INA Trials in November, 1945.
- Worked with the Urdu daily '*Pratap*' for over four decades-1945-1987 retiring as News Editor.
- Secretary General, Indian Federation of Working Journalists, (1980-1982).
- Convenor, National Campaign Committee against the Defamation Bill, in 1988.
- Founder President, Indian Journalist Union (1990-1992)
- President, All India Newspaper Employees Federation (1995-2001)
- Organised a large number of strikes in the newspaper industry to win economic demands, to express solidarity with workers in other industries and to defend the Freedom of the Press.
- Awarded "Scroll of Honor" by the International Organisation of Journalists, (IOJ) in Recognition of invaluable service rendered to the World Journalist Movement, on the occasion of IOJ's 50th founding anniversary (1946-1996).
- Visited a number of countries in South-east Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Europe and Latin America. Visited Afghanistan and Pakistan four times.
- Author of 'Delhi to Berlin', a travelogue of five countries in English and Hindi, published in 1965. Also Urdu version of Lahore Nama published in 1983.
- Editor, TRADE UNION RECORD, Journal of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), since 1994.

He is the only working journalist who was born and brought up in Lahore and came to India after partion in 1947. 33 years later, the call of his land of birth was so powerful that he left to find his old moorings and to see how much the humanity and fellow feelings the city of Lahore still retained. To his pleasant surprise, he found that Lahore retained the same warmth and cordiality he had known earlier.

His visit to Lahore in 1980 was followed by three more trips in 1987, 1995 and 1999. Each time he met the people from different walks of life and was received everywhere with openhearted generosity. Through these contacts, he has discovered that the cordial feelings are the same, notwithstanding the communal hatred spread by the vested interests.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to late Shri Ravinder Kumar, eminent historian and Former Director, Nehru Memorial Library, Teen Murti, New Delhi. He is the man who put my own family's jounalistic history within perspective. He made me revalue my antecedents.

My thanks to Swaran, my wife of more than 40 years who also left Lahore in 1947, alongwith her parents and siblings. Her roots in Lahore are deeper than mine. Her ancestors, the Khannas of Lahore, had been traders in the grain market - Akbari Mandi - established by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the sixteenth century. But for her help, the completion of this book would have been impossible.

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December, 1980

FIRST VISIT

My life's twentieth spring was destroyed by the partition of India. Perhaps Destiny had deemed that the year 1947 AD would spell disaster for millions.

That was the period when the viewpoint of the nationalist *ulama* in India had suffered defeat that the nations were based upon *watan*, land of birth, not religion, when Islam had become the handmaiden of Indian muslim communal politics. When centuries old human and *watani* relations were sought to be undermined.

It was under helpless and humiliating conditions that I left Lahore, the city of my birth, on 17 September 1947. I could not imagine that I would ever visit the city again to meet the local journalists again. It was in this city that my grandfather Pandit Mukand Ram (1831-1897), founder of the *Akhbar-i-Aam* (Urdu), and *Mittra Vilasa* (Hindi), had been a pioneer of journalism in the early seventees of the nineteenth century.

Thirty years passed by from 1947 to 1977. In journalism and in the trade union movement, my hair had turned grey. Then in 1979, the idea occurred to me that I should visit Lahore once again. As the Punjabi saying goes: *Jineh Lahore nahi vekhya, oh jamya e nahi* (He who has not seen Lahore has not seen anything).

On 15 December 1980, I crossed the Wagah border on foot, carrying just 240 Pakistani rupees, the permissible limit. At that time General Zia-ul-Haque was the ruler of Pakistan. Elected Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had been hanged sometime back.

From the Wagah border to the Lahore railway station, where I got down from the bus carrying me from the border, I did not see any political wall poster on the way. Of course, posters announcing programmes of condolence meetings being organised to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grand son of the Prophet of Arabia, were to be seen in plenty.

From June to August, 1947, the Muslim League National Guards, though believers in the unity of God but blinded by passions and hatred, succeeded in burning down street after street of the Shah Alami Gate area – from the now non existant Gate to the Rang-mahal, finishing and driving out the surviving Hindus and Sikhs from the ancient city. I had witnessed the processions of Jawahar Lal Nehru and

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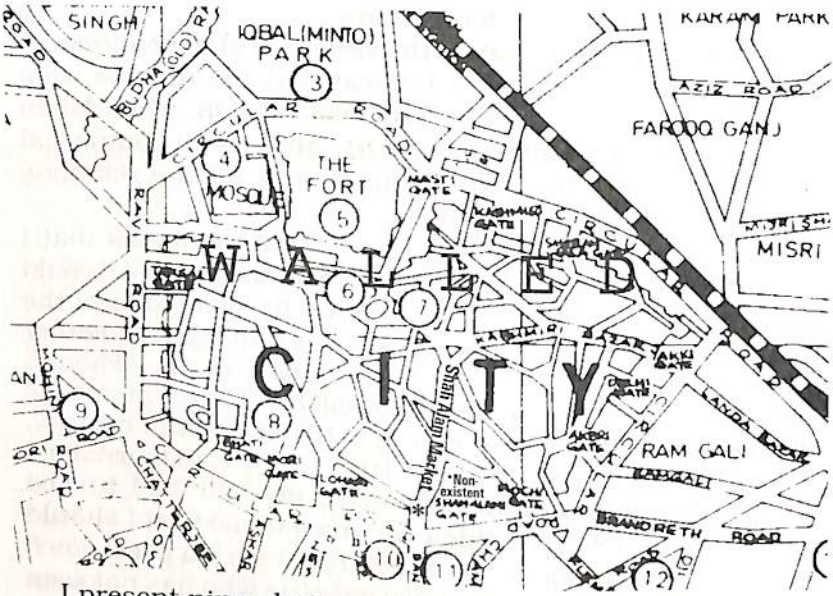
Subhash Chandra Bose, passing through the Shah Alami Bazaar, in the good old days. Later on, when Pakistan came into existence, there was no alternative but to bulldoze the whole area. On the debris of the old, now stands a huge three storeyed market, called Shah Alam Market.



I present nine photographs of Lahore, in flames, sent to me by Shri Govind Lal, in 1981. Shri Lal was a freelance press photographer in Lahore, in 1947.

A view of the destruction in Shah Alami Bazaar

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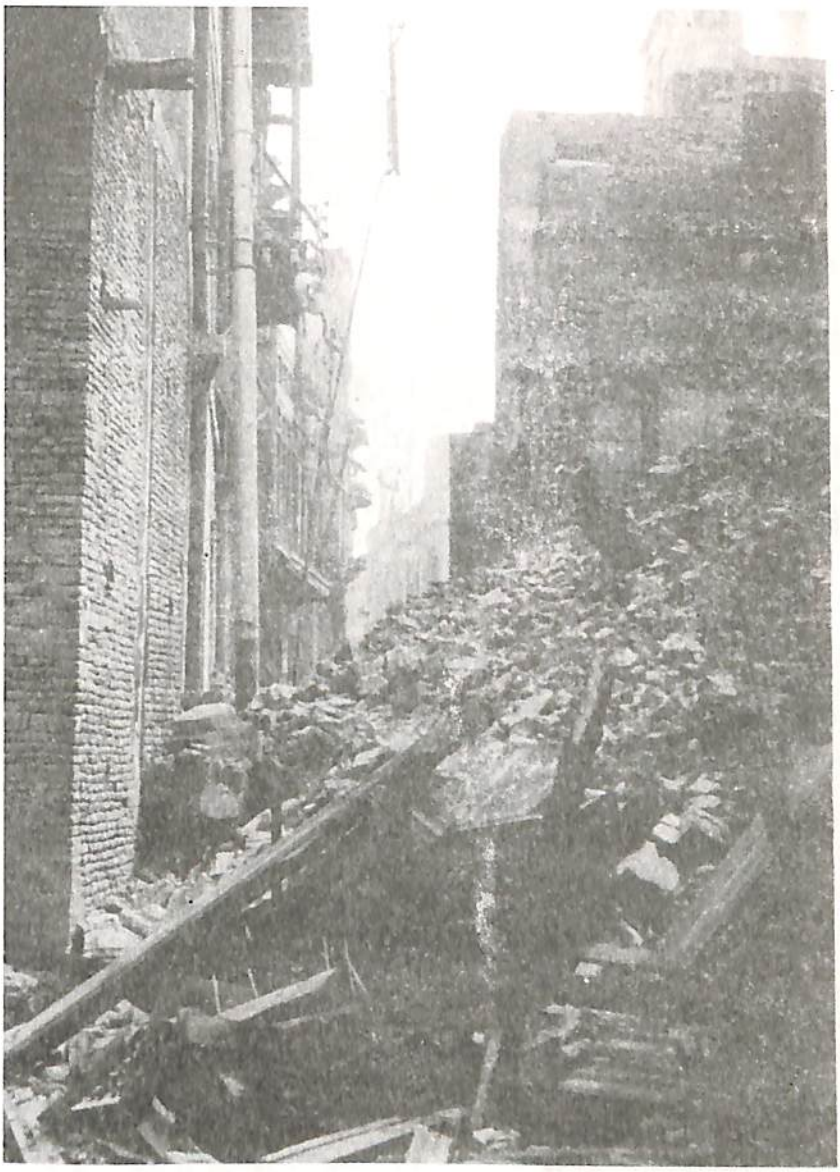

Another view of the destruction in Shah Alami Bazaar

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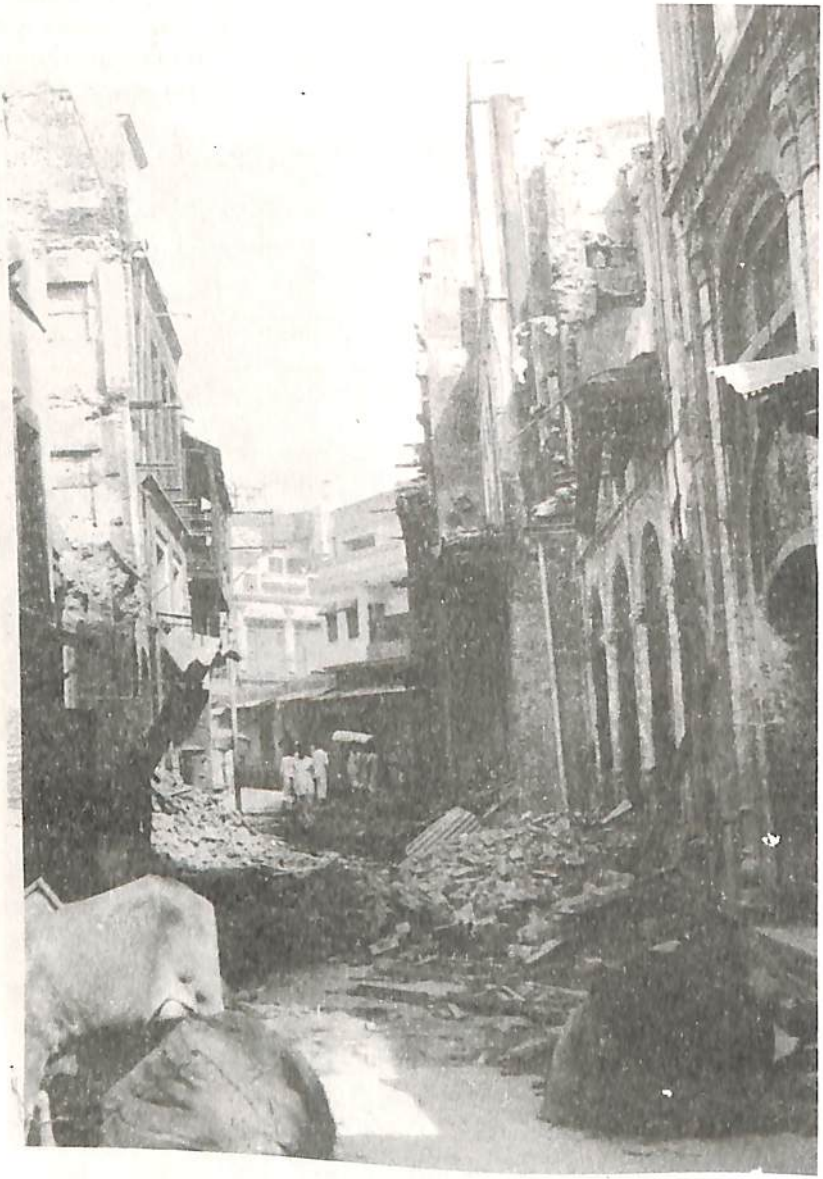

Burnt lofty buildings in Chunne Mandi in the Walled City.

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Destruction in Akbari Mandi

A lone sentry standing in a ravaged area of Shah Alami Gate

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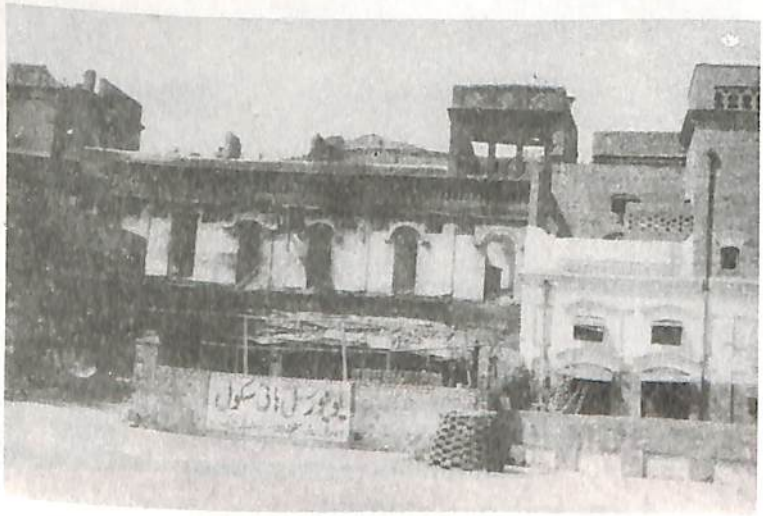
A burnt house in Mozang Area



A torched High School building in Mozang area

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Shopkeepers trying to salvage goods from their destroyed shops

British bureaucrats and Police officers passing through a deserted street.

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On the crossing of the Chamber Lane Road and the Nisbet Road was the famous sweetmeat shop of Umrao Singh. Adjacent to that was the "Pratap Building", which had the office of the leading Urdu language daily "*The Pratap*". Here in this establishment I had started work as a journalist, in 1945.

From the balcony of the office, I had witnessed, in later part of February and early March 1947, the processions taken out by the Muslim League to overthrow the non-muslim league unionist ministry headed by Khizir Hyat Khan. It was a coalition of the Unionist Party, Congress Party and the Akali Party of the Punjab. The processions presented a spectacle of people filled with communal hatred. Not only the men but also hundreds of muslim women, without veil, joined them. And the only slogan raised was

Dil ki tamana Pakistan, Le ke rahenge Pakistan
Pakistan ka matlab kya, La Illa il il la
Our hearts desire Pakistan, We shall have Pakistan
What is the meaning of Pakistan, Islamic State.

One day towards the end of February 1947, the resignation of Khizir became the talk of the town. The mindless young men and women, in their enthusiasm for *jehad* and their determination to frighten the Tiwana Rajput in Khizir, were raising the sky-rending abusive slogan against Khizir:

Sajja paer juti da Khizir putar kutti da
Our right foot, Khizir the son of a bitch

Suddenly, some one broke the news that Khizir had joined the Muslim League and in a twinkling of the eye, another slogan was coined:

Tazaa khabar ayee ai (Latest is the news)
Khizir sada bhai ai (Khizir is our bosom brother)

And this went on till some one contradicted the news and again the old cultural show resumed.

First Day's Wanderings

Wandering through the old town on the first day of my arrival in Lahore, I entered *Doctran-da-Mohalla*, where the immensely popular medical practitioners, Dr. Beli Ram, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargo, who later became first Chief Minister of East Punjab after partititon, Dr. Nihal Chand Sikri and Dr.Shankar Das Mehra, had practised in the pre-partition

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days. It was in this *mohalla* that a family of Kashmiri Pandits lived whose daughter Swaroop Rani (pet name Basso) later became Jawaharlal's mother.

Doctran da Mohalla extends to "*Wachhowali*" –a vast area of small lanes and bylanes and *mohallas*, of course. This locality had a huge building complex housing the offices of the Sanatan Dharam Sabha, a lower middle school, a *pathshala* and, of course, a temple. Its vast enclosure was a venue of many social functions. More than once, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya had addressed the meetings of the local citizens in this building, exhorting them to change with the times. In December, 1900, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak also addressed a public meeting in the vast enclosure when he had visited Lahore to attend the annual session of the Indian National Congress.

Also, in this courtyard, the late Vishnu Digambar had sung the popular *Aarti* "*OM JAYA JAGDEESH HAREY*", when fame descended upon him and the citizens of Lahore invited him to do something for popularising *Shastriya Sangeet*. This invocation "*OM JAYA JAGDEESH HAREY*" was composed by a Sanatani Swami Shraddhanand (not of Arya Samaj fame). The last stanza of the *Aarti* carries his *nom-de-plum 'Shraddha'*. Swamiji resided in the Hari Gyan Mandir situated on Mohan Lal Road, the famous text book market of Lahore. Swamiji was an old friend of our family and despite old age visited our house located in the Kucha Badri Bhagat* inside Shah Alami Gate, quite often. I still remember playing a game of chess or *chaupad* with Swamiji in my house during some of his visits. I also vividly remember my mother serving Swamiji with Kashmiri *kahwa* in the *khasoo*, the typical Kashmiri drinking bowl made of bronze (*Kansi*). In 1901, Vishnu Digambar established Gandharv Maha Vidyala in Lahore which functioned in the Ram Nagar area till the Partition.

Lahore had a long tradition of music lovers. It is recorded that during the reign of Jehangir, when Bijapur's sovereign ruler Ibrahim Adil Shah II, a great lover of fine arts, visited Lahore in 1614, he found opportunity to listen to some of the masters in the field. Highly impressed by their performance, returning to his kingdom, he took a reputed singer with him who introduced *dhrupad* in the south.

* Badri Bhagat was a disciple of the famous Chhaju Bhagat of Lahore

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Near the Sanatan Dharam Sabha Complex, was situated the "*Telian di Khui*" where towards the end of 19th century lived Professor Tirath Ram, who later on became the famous vedantist Swami Ram Tirath. He took *jal-samadhi* in the Ganga near Tehri in 1906 at the young age of 33. Poet Iqbal has paid poetic homage to him.

Ham baghal darya se hai ay katrae betaab tu,
Pehle gauhar tha ab bana gauhre nayaab tu.
Ye, the restless drop, has joined the ocean,
Ealier you were a pearl, now that pearl is lost for ever

On the first day of my visit (15 December 1980) I went to the office of the daily *Mashriq* and met a number of journalists. One of them Sarfraz Ahmad invited me to spend the night at his residence. We reached the home of the host in the evening , in the Aurangzeb Block of the Journalist Colony. Sarfraz led me into the drawing-cum-dining room. And soon, thereafter, I was taken to a fellow journalist residing in the neighbourhood. Some others also joined.

After introduction, one of them said "Neighbours should never fight. There is nothing but loss".

Another said, "What is the purpose of the fight if the captured areas are to be returned at the end of the day?" He was referring to the 1965 war between India and Pakistan when both countries had captured large chunks of each other's country but returned them as a result of the Tashkent Agreement. "Then why these killings? No, never, there should never be a war. Our whole attention should be concentrated on development. India, too, should not buy new warplanes to overawe us. Now we need friendship and peace."

I tried to convince them that India has a democratic tradition and democratic institutions. Freedom of speech and press is exercised without any fear. There is no single leader of our colourful secular polity. Every party has its own leader and every leader is answerable not only to his party but to the whole country. All leaders hold different views on many problems. However, all are unanimous in the view that war is no solution of the problems.

Talking about the journalists I asked them about the closure of the *Musawaat* (the organ of the Pakistan's People's Party which was closed down by Gen. Zia's Martial Law

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regime). When I expressed a desire to know more about the freedom of the press, they gave me the required address.

During the second day of my stay in Lahore, I met one of the seniormost journalists in Pakistan, Mr. Nisar Ahmed Usmani, Chief of Bureau of the *Dawn* at Lahore, the heart of Pakistan. He was a tested one. I had known the sufferings of Mr. Usmani. He had been arrested a number of times for espousing the cause of the freedom of press. He was handcuffed and he spent sometime in the custody of the military. When I told him that I was the news editor of the Urdu daily *Pratap* and also the secretary general of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, he expressed immense pleasure.

Third from the right is Nisar Ahmed Usmani, the journalist with the guts, at the Civil Lines Police Station

Motioning me to be seated he said, "Lucky indeed you are, a journalist from a country where anything can be

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written against the Government. Here, everything is topsy turvy. Politics has been destroyed and the State is on the verge of collapse." He gave details about the trials faced by the journalists under the Martial Law regime. He also informed me how fast the protesters, against the suppression of the freedom of the press, were punished by the military officers of the regime. Usmani, who originally hailed from Allahabad and had joined the *Dawn* in Delhi and moved to Pakistan along with *Dawn*, told the master of the country, Gen. Zia, at the end of his one press conference that a journalist was still in jail: that he was a thorough gentleman and had been in the fore-front of the Pakistan movement. It was a collective demand of the Pakistani journalists that he be released. On hearing the name of that journalist the President flared up and waving his arm spoke, "If I just signal, he will disappear forever. He is fortunate to find himself safe behind the bars". Usmani once again submitted, "Of course, you enjoy limitless powers and can cause his end within no time but here the question is not of causing death but of the freedom of the press. Pakistan is earning a bad name throughout the world. Journalists of different countries are cutting jokes about our present system of Government." The President once again ignored the request. Thereupon Usmani, the journalist with the guts spoke for the third time and reminded the President "Mr. President, I have covered eight Presidents of Pakistan during my journalistic career and I don't like to think that I am addressing the last one". The General without uttering a word, walked away.

Mr. Usmani told me that the Pakistan newspapers had lost their credibility and the situation had come to such a pass that the people in order to know the conditions of their country tune in to the broadcasts from other countries'.

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MEETING USTAAD DAAMAN

Ustaad Daaman

It was evening, when Umar Saleem, the journalist with whom I stayed the second night, asked my next programme. I told him that once in Lahore, it was next to impossible to miss paying regards to *Ustaad Daaman*, the great Punjabi poet. The same evening we reached his abode. He was visibly moved when I told the *Ustaad* that I had been listening to his poetry in the public rallies organised by the Congress, before the Partition. He seated me by his side on his cot. Our rambling conversation led him to narrate his experiences. Eventually, he said, "Thousands of prophets have descended upon this world. *Nabis* have also been sent, Buddha preached in this land. *Rishis, Munis,* all have come. And in the contemporary world a saint like Gandhi was also born. Each one of them taught human beings to be human. Is it not a matter of shame that man still remains a beast? In Punjabi, he said, "*Insaan darinde da darinda he reha*".

Ustaad said, "Who knows the solution of this problem? At least, I do not"? He spoke a lot and aloud, the substance of all being the question: When will man become a real human being *(Eh banda banda kad banega)?*

Readers may be interested to know a little more about *Ustaad* Chiraagh Din *Daaman* (3.9.1911 – 3.12.1984).

Ustaad Daaman was a popular poet and a Congress activist of Lahore before the partition. He was a tailor by profession and ran a shop in Baghbanpura, situated near the world famous Shalimar Bagh. He had recited his poems in many a public meeting addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was highly impressed by his diction and delivery.

After partition, the Muslim League National Guards, the torch bearers of Islamic brotherhood, burned down his shop and his house and the library. That incident left the *Ustaad*

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heart broken. He said goodbye to Baghbanpura and landed in the verandah of the Badshahi Mosque. *Daaman* produced many poems thereafter but nobody was allowed to record.

In early 1950, *Ustaad Daaman* shifted to the *hujra* which after his death now houses *the Ustaad Daaman* Academy. This *hujra* was once the abode of the great Sufi poet Shah Hussain during the reign of Akbar.

Sometime after independence, *Ustaad Daaman* attended a *mushaira* in the Red Fort of Delhi. In the presence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who knew him personally, the *Ustaad* recited the following couplet extempore:

Azadia hatho barbaad yaro, hoi tusi vi o, hoi asi ve aa
Independence has destroyed us, friends, you too, and us.
Laali Akhaa di payi dasdi ae, roe tusi ve o, roe asi ve aa
The red in the eyes betrays , you have wept, we too.
Jaagan walian raj ke lutia ae, soyae tusi vi o soyae asi vi an
The watchful have plendered us, you too have lost. And us.
Translated by Waqas Ahmed and published in "The Nation of Lahore", dated 14 October, 1987.

The audience including Pandit Nehru wept on hearing the stanza. Thereupon Panditji told *Ustaad Daaman*, "The desire of the people of India as well as my own desire is that *Ustaad* Daaman may stay on here". However, *Daamanji* declined the invitation and told Panditji: '*MEIN RAWA GA LAHORE WHICH E, BHAVEIN JAIL WHITCH HE RAWA*'.

I will continue to live in Lahore, even though in jail.

(Poetry of Daaman)

I would like the readers to know what he wrote during General Zia's martial law regime.

* *Mere mulk de do khuda La Ila te martial law*
There are two gods of this country La Ila and Martial Law
Ik rehnda arsha ute duja rehnda farsha ute
One lives in the skies the other is on the ground
Ohda na ae Allah mian Ehda na ae General Zia
His name is Allah Mian this one is Gen. Zia
Wah bai wah General Zia Kon kehnda tenu etho ja
Hail Gen. Zia, who asks you to quit

** *Saare mulk diya mauja hi mauja Jidhar dekho fauja e fauja*
What fun for our lovely land, wherever we look the armies stand

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Lakha bande kaidi hoke Adha dende mulk gava
Thousands became prisoners and half the country is lost
Wa bhai wa General Zia kaun khe tenu etho ja
Hail Gen. Zia who can ask to you quit

***

On the death of **MAHATMA GANDHI**

Goli maari hai jisne Mahatma nu, ohne zameen da gola ghuma dita,
Whosever has shot the Mahatma, has stunned the globe
Cheeka vich awaaz ik aman di si, kise zaalim ne gla dabaa dita
His was the lone voice of peace in the cries around, some tyrant has stilled that voice

***

Some other Couplets

*** *Manaa murti, kaabe de wal jhukna, Rama apna, ghair Rehman vi nahi*
I adore the idol and kneel down towards Kaaba
Jado khyal aanda auhdi bandgi da, Rehnda nahi Hindu, Musalman vi nahi
Whenever I wish to pray then I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim

**** *Wageh nal Attari de nahi takkar, na Gita nal Quran di ae*
There is no confrontation between Wagah and Attari
Nahi kufr, Islam da koi jhagra, sari gal eh nafe nuksan di ae
No, there is no quarrel between Kufar and Islam. The whole thing centers around profit and loss

***** *Pakistan di ajab ae vand hoi, thora es paase thora us paase*
What type of Pakistan came into being, one part on this side, one on the other
Enha jarahan ne ki ilaaj karna, marham es paase phora us paase
What can the surgeons do here when the boil is this side and ointment on the other
Asaa manzil maqsood te pahunchana ki, tanga es paase ghora us passe
How can we achieve our destination, cart is on this side, the horse on the other

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The car carrying us to Umar Saleem's residence situated in Gumti Bazar area entered the *Hiramandi* of the ancient town through the Taxali Gate. This red light area settled during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign had earned a name in united India, known for the great singers produced by the families residing there. Nur Jehan, melody queen of the sub-continent is one of them. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, who once mesmerised even Mahatma Gandhi, lived in this area. Shamshad Begum was another honoured singer who later, migrated to Bombay.

Umar Saleem signalled me to enter a lane. And I, while reading the nameplate *"Kutcha Aurangzeb"* as if sub-consciously shouted, "But this was *'Kutcha Kali Mata'*. Yes, the companions replied. A lawyer accompanying us remarked half-joking; "What is the difference between *Kali Mata* and *Aurangzeb?"* The temple of the goddess *Kali Mata* had now been turned into a human habitation.

At the house of Umar Saleem, the conversation turned to Indo-Pakistan relations and other subjects. One of the guests who had joined us said, "You have come during the biting cold weather. But believe us, if ever you happen to come here during better times, you will find an open atmosphere." I wanted to know when the better time would come. Came the reply, "Very soon".

"But what is the basis of this expectation?" I enquired. Again he replied, "Work is going on, gradually the balance is being restored". And he continued, "People are fed up with perennial autumn. And after the beating by the sizzling heat, the freezing cold will also not long."

Then may we think that after the bitter experience, of extreme heat and cold, arrangements will be made to maintain normal temperature. What is the guarantee that when the present military regime ends, another military regime will not take over? Came the reply, "No, that would not be allowed to happen".

Kissa Jag Maayee Ka

(The story of the revered lady)

Sipping coffee after dinner, I told Umar Saleem that the ceiling of the room was of cement and linter. Herebefore, the ceilings used to be of wooden beams. Is it a newly built house?

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Yes, he replied, "This house had collapsed a few years ago. I purchased it in an auction and have rebuilt it. May I tell you the story of the house and its former resident?" I said, please do so. Saleem narrated the most interesting story which will ever remain fresh in my mind.

"In 1947", Saleem said, "when all the Hindu and Sikh residents of this area had migrated and all the lanes and streets looked deserted, somehow one old Hindu lady continued to live in this house which belonged to her. About her family she used to say that her son's name was Kishan Lal, a goldsmith by avocation. Gradually, the caravans of Muslim refugees from East Punjab started arriving and occupied the houses of the Hindus and Sikhs who had left Lahore. The lane acquired new faces. One day, when the refugees advised the old lady to leave the house for the Refugee Camp at Lajpat Bhawan*, she flared up and shouted back. "I shall not leave. It is my house and I shall continue to dwell here". Had she been killed in the beginning in the frenzy when partition took place, the incident might had been forgotten. But weeks passed by and then nobody was prepared to kill the harmless old creature. She had some stock of grains and continued to cook her food herself. When she desired during the day she would sit on the threshold of her house and spin yarn on her *charkha*. And if ever she wished, she would go to the river Ravi for a bath. On the Diwali night of November, 1947, three months after the founding of Pakistan, the old lady celebrated Diwali, the great Hindu festival by lighting earthen lamps outside her main door. Her house alone was lit up. She herself prepared sweets which she distributed among the Muslim neighbours. As a result, the neighbours also started talking to her and enquiring about her health and welfare. It so happened that a neighbour fell ill and she started visiting that house to nurse the sick person. She would spend hours in that house. When the patient recovered from illness, he, too, started paying his regards to her. By and by, she started visiting other households,

* The Refugee Camp was run under the charge of Lala Achint Ram, a prominent social worker of Punjab. His son Krishan Kant is the present Vice-President of India.

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as well. It so happened that any house she would visit would receive good tidings. Prayers were answered. Somebody's son got a job. Someone's daughter got a good husband. Somebody got promotion while some married lady gave birth to a bonny boy. And so, slowly but steadily, human feelings full of affection developed between the old Hindu lady, and the muslim residents of the *kutcha*. True, there were no more grains left in her house but the neighbours themselves took turns to serve food to her. She would receive a plate full of bread and cooked vegetables and pulses, every morning and in the evening. And, whenever tea was prepared in any house, some boy would carry a glassful of the decoction to her in a glass of metal. Gradually, the fame of the old lady spread from *Gumti to Syad Mitha* meaning *Syad the sweet*. She came to be known and hailed as the *Jagmayee* (revered lady of the earth). Years flew by. Her son never returned, but every resident of the area felt proud to be called her loved one.

Then came 1962 and one day, she breathed her last. The neighbours decided to carry her dead body to the muslim cemetery to be buried with all the respects as with the migration of *kafirs*, the ancient hindu crematorium, *Ramu da Bagh*, had been closed. When a neighbour reached the nearby mosque to fetch the *dola* (wooden cot kept in every mosque to carry the dead) the *maulvi* enquired as to who had expired. Informed that the old Hindu lady had passed away and the cot was required to carry her dead body, *moulvi sahib* chose to visit the lane where the old lady lived and died. He gathered all the residents and told them that she was now dead and it mattered little to her as to how her mortal remains were disposed of, but they must remember that she had remained a Hindu till the last and their faith demanded that her last rites should be performed according to Hindu custom. *Maulvi Sahib's* words had an electric effect on the residents. She was carried to the banks of Ravi according to Hindu custom. The neighbours lit the pyre. On the third day, her cooled down ashes were collected and consigned to the river. The narration continued past midnight.

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Curiosity of a Pakistani Lad

On the morning of 17 December, 1980, as I left the house after breakfast, my host Umar sent his young son to accompany me. While in the lane we heard a woman voice, '*Wai Sikandar*', calling her son. This voice came from a house which once was '*Mandir Kali Mata*'. It was turned into a human habitat after the partition. At that very moment the young boy asked me, "Uncle! What difference do you find in Lahore now?" in Punjabi. It was a good question as the young boy was curious to know the difference between the pre-partition days in Lahore and the present scenario. My spontaneous response to his question was "*Pehle is mohalle vich mein Wai Mahinder sunda sa, hun Wai Sikandar sun reha aan* (Earlier, in this *mohalla*, I used to hear *Wai Mahinder* and now I can hear *Wai Sikandar.)*

I passed through *Syad Mitha Bazaar* where the famous sweetmeat shop of a Hindu, Megh Raj alias Meghi, had developed a speciality called *Gul-bahisht* (Flower of heaven).

After walking about 200 metres, I felt sad at the sight of *Haveli* Dhyan Singh, of its chequered history as it revived memories of Raja Dhyan Singh, the Prime Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the younger brother of Raja Gulab Singh, Governor of Jammu, who later on bought Kashmir from the British Government under the Treaty of Amritsar concluded on 16 March 1846, by paying Rs.75 lakhs (Nanakshahi). All this happened because the sovereign State of Punjab, had, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, degenerated into *Barchha-gardi* meaning lawlessness and crumbled.

On the sale of the State, Poet Iqbal had once commented:

"*Qaume farokhtand, che arzaa frokhtand*".

(A nation was bartered away; And so cheap).

Dhyan Singh was murdered following the court intrigues after the death of the Maharaja.

It was in a house located in the sprawling *haveli* that my late father Pandit Bal Krishna was born in 1880 and it was from Dyal Singh High School located in another part of the *haveli* that he matriculated in 1897. Before the Partition the

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haveli had belonged to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir State. It was with the permission of the Maharaja that in 1864, Lahore College was established in another part of the *haveli*. Opposite to the *haveli* was also the property of Kashmir State. Now the same property carried a plate "Azad Kashmir Government Property". Sardar Dyal Singh was a Brahmo Samaji, a follower of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who established a trust to educate people to bring about renaissance. His trust not only established the High School mentioned above but also Dyal Singh College (where my cousin Professor P.N. Pandit taught sciences for many years till partition) and the Dyal Singh Library. The Raja Ram Mohan Roy hostel of the college, situated on the Nisbet Road, opened on an old road running by it. It was renamed Khawaja Dil Muhammad Road. Khawaja Sahib was a former principal of Islamia College of Lahore. He translated Gita into Urdu poetry under the title "*Dil Ki Gita*" which has now become a classic. A copy of the first edition of *"Dil Ki Gita"*, published in Lahore in 1944, is still in my library.

Passing through the famous Dabbi Bazaar I recalled the two shrines of the pre-partition era, *Sunehri Gurdwara* popularly known as *Boali Sahib* and a *Sunehri Masjid*. These shrines stood across a very narrow lane. *Sunehri Masjid* still stood but the gurdwara was not there. It had been burnt during the pre-partition riots in 1947.

Then I reached a place where once existed the famous *Hanuman Mandir*. The temple was no more and in its place I found an embroidery shop.

Passing through *Sheesha Moti Bazaar* I passed by *Harcharan dia Pauriyan* and again entered *Wachhowali* area. In the locality of *Harcharan dia Pauriyan* once lived the famous painter Pandit Tota Ram *Naqqash*. Tota Ram ji was a brother of my grandmother. He was a master of Kashmir School of Painting. Some of the masterpieces, with our family, were retrieved by me from the burning house during July 1947. The paintings, all registered under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, now adorn my study. I am reproducing some of them here. *(On page 21-24)*

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Shaarika, the presiding deity of Kashmir : Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and the nine *grahas* invoking her blessings.

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Six handed Shankar and Parvati, with folded hands, celebrating Hairath (Shivratri), Shankar holding 2 *vatkus* (Small earthen pots) full of almonds and walnuts for distribution among the devotees. Parvati is the first devotee.

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Vishnu at Sheshnag Lake - the halt before Panchtarni on the way to Amarnath Cave

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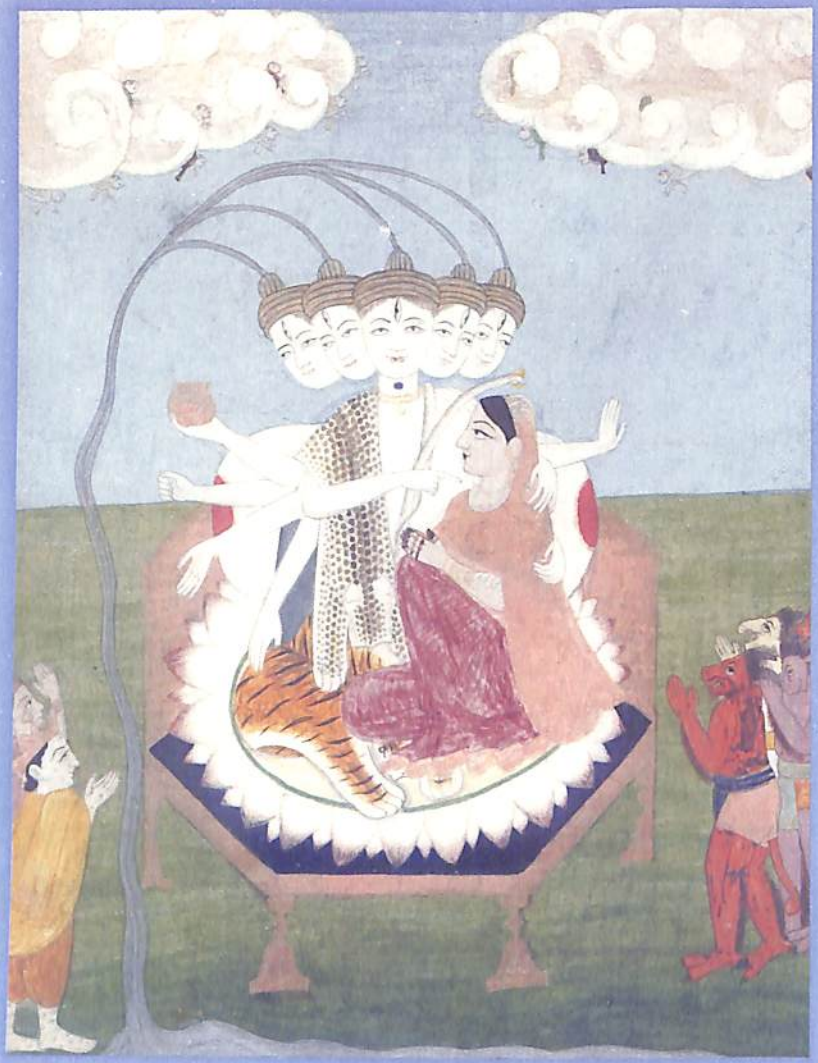

Five headed Shankar and Parvati at Panchtarni - the last halt before Amarnath Cave. From the jataa of each head of Shankar, springs a stream of the Ganga.

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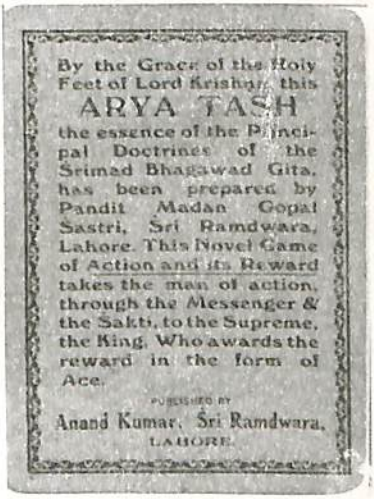
I proceeded towards *Kutcha Mehtian* and entered a lane and saw many houses where some of my near and dear ones used to live including my first cousin Professor J.P. Gurtu *alias* Jankubhai, a gold medalist and an alumunus of the F.C. College, whose name appears on the roll of honour of that institution.

Unique Contribution of a Scholar

Coming out of the *Kutcha Mehtian* and moving towards *Kutcha Ramdwara*, my feet refused to move. I stood still. There was no desire to move towards *Ramdwara*. It was a temple complex which finds reference in the history of Lahore authored by Syed Muhammad Latif. I had regularly visited the complex for three years to learn Sanskrit from the famous scholar Pandit Laxmi Narain Ji. He was the eldest of the three brothers, all scholars. While the second brother Pandit Paras Ram was a great *katha- vachak*, the youngest Pandit Madan Gopal, culled the teachings of *Bhagwat Gita* and presented the results through the medium of a set of playing cards. The message carried on each card is printed in six languages, Hindi, Urdu, English, Tamil, Bengali and Telegu. About 30 years back, I managed another pack of the playing cards from Anand Kumar son of Pt. Madan Gopal. It is my cherished possession. Here is a sample, of how he presents, LOKA, this World of Action.


By the Grace of the Holy Feet of Lord Krishna, this
ARYA TASH
the essence of the Principal Doctrines of the Srimad Bhagawad Gita, has been prepared by Pandit Madan Gopal Sastri, Sri Ramdwara, Lahore. This Novel Game of Action and its Reward takes the man of action, through the Messenger & the Sakti, to the Supreme, the King, Who awards the reward in the form of Ace.
PUBLISHED BY
Anand Kumar, Sri Ramdwara,
LAHORE.

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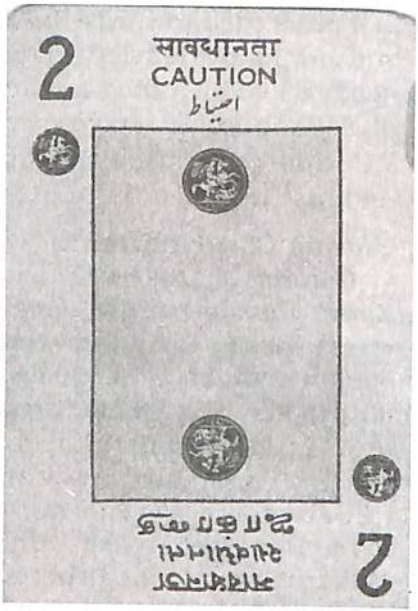

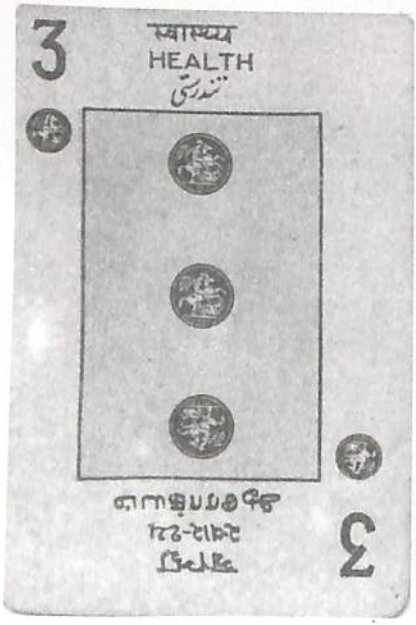

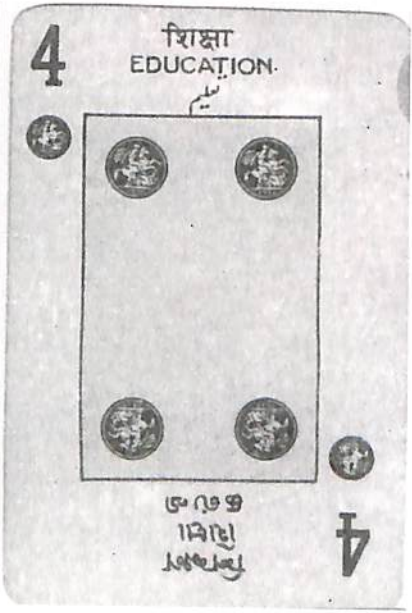

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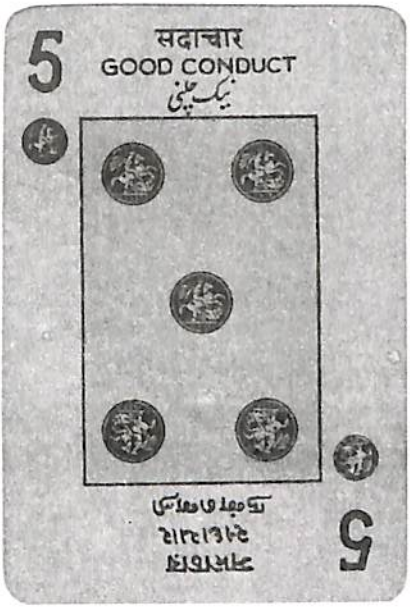

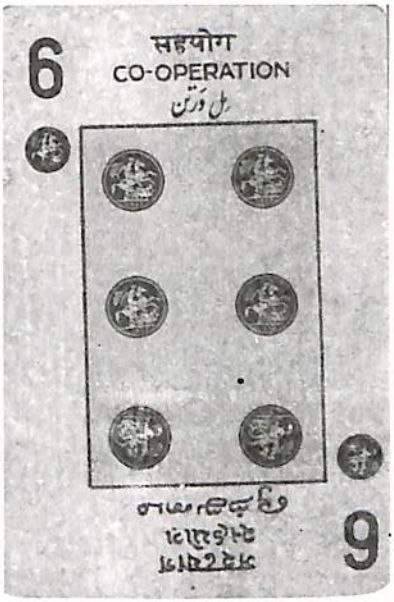

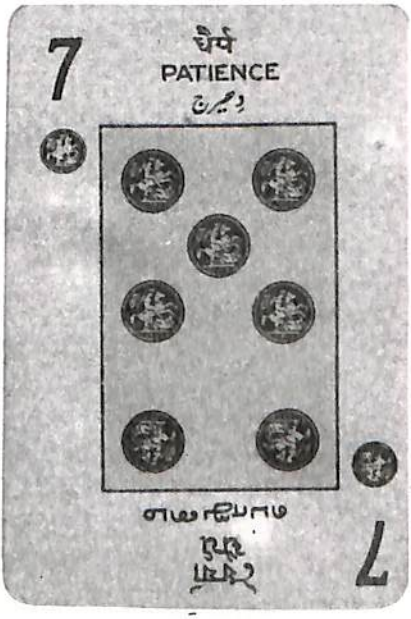

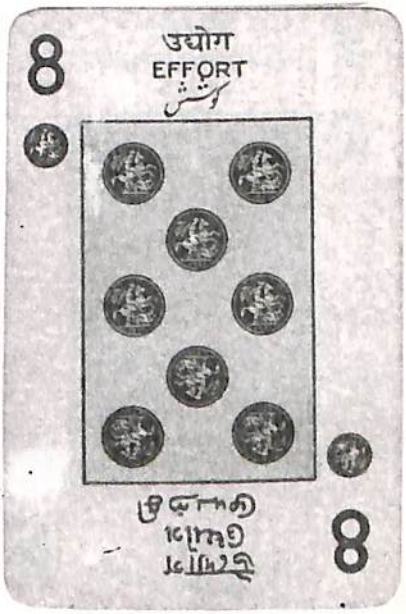

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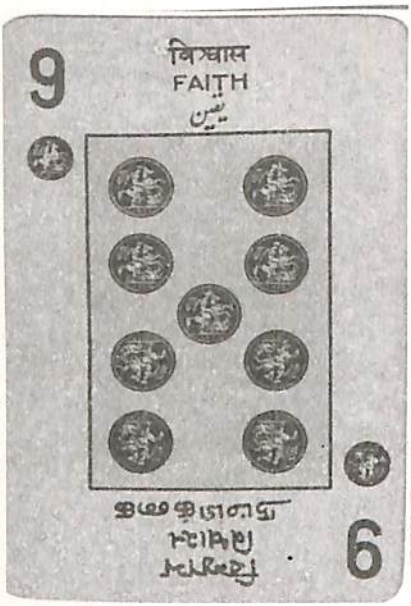

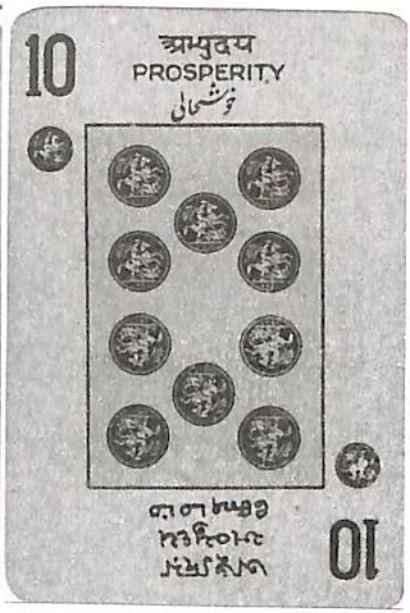

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MEETING EHSAAN DAANISH

Ehsaan Daanish

In the afternoon, I entered *Anarkali*, the famous bazaar of Lahore and reached the residence of Ehsaan *Daanish*, well-known poet – once hailed as *Shair-e-Mazdoor* (the Poet of the Labour). Some other poets were also present in his *baithak*. Danish originally belonged to Bijnaur district of Western Uttar Pradesh but had settled down in Lahore before partition. I presented him an introductory letter written by one common friend, Mr. Zafar Adeeb, Secretary, Anjumane-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Hind, Delhi. After seating me comfortably, he said, "What difficult times are now that there cannot be arranged an Indo-Pakistan *mushaira* (poetic symposium.) People on both sides of the divide have been thirsting to listen to the poets of both countries. Such gatherings may help improve the atmosphere and restore balance. The poets and the men of letters can do what the politicians and the ambassadors can hardly do. Who knows when that moment will come when Lahore and Delhi will witness the same old *mushairas*".

I told him that so far as India is concerned, there is no restriction on the entry of any Pakistani poet. "Even I am prepared to invite any poet wishing to visit Delhi".

He replied that the question was not about the visit of a particular poet. The question is how to solve the problems between the two countries.

A Pakistani poet who was present in his *baithak* said, "True, Indo-Pak relations are today far better than few years back. But the need of the hour is to improve them still further. After all, how long will the present tension persist. And when will that day come when like USA and Canada, people of the

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two parts of the same old country i.e. India, will be able to move freely in this region".

Another friend of *Daanish* present there, satirically suggested that a *mushaira* be organised near the border with public address system installed on both sides. "We shall announce that the people from Delhi and Lucknow and from Lahore to Karachi may assemble on both sides of the border and thus enjoy the festival of poetry – a festival of friendship".

I asked *Daanish* Sahib about the position and stand of Pakistani poets on the subject of freedom of expression. He replied that some still stood by their old human values but some had succumbed to the pressure of the Establishment which was not interested in improving relations with India. He mentioned the name of an eminent writer from West Punjab and said that till yesterday he was considered progressive but now had become loyal to the Establishment. For this change, the government had awarded him a prize of one lakh rupees.

Seeing the indifferent health of old *Daanish*, I did not like to take more of his time. As I took leave he handed over to me his latest book of poems "*Fasle Salaa Sal*".

It includes his poetic homage to Mahatma Gandhi.

On hearing the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

1/i *Ghazab hai rukhste saaqi se maikhaine pe kya guzri*
ii *Surahi ka hua kya haal paimaane pe kya guzri.*
2/i *Yeh puchhe koi is gardo ghubare betahaasha se*
ii *Ke deewane ke gum ho jane se vairane pe kya guzri*
3/i *Mubarik zindgi hi ko mubarik maut milti hai*
ii *Adu bhi keh rahe hain haaye begaane pe kya guzri**

In still another poem "*Jo waqt nazdeek aa raha hai*", he has taken to task those who had sold out their pen during General Zia's military regime.

Jo waqt nazdeek aa rah hai

1/i *Sahaafion ke dil-o-nazar ko, naheef-o-nadaar dekhta hoon.*
ii *Zaban-o-afkar bik rahe hain, kalam ke beopar dekhta hoon.*

I find the jounalists fickle-minded and helpless, I witness the language and the thoughts on sale.

2/i *Awaam din raat mar rahe hain, khawaas per kuchh asar nahi hai.*

* The poet laments the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi with various similies, for which the author finds that the English equlients are dry and inadequate.

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ii *Jo waqt nazdeek aa raha hai, kisi ko uski khabar nahi hai.*
The people are crying day and night, the elite is not bothered, however, nobody knows what is in store

3/i *Na jaane kis din awaam bigde, khawaas zulum-o-sitam barah deyn.*
Who knows when the poor people turn hostile, and the elite mount acts of tyranny

3/ii *Na jaane kis din yeh jaumpriyon ke makeen, mehlon ko larh khra deyn*
Who knows when the occupants of the shanty town shake up the palaces

3/iii *Na jaane kis din gharib gahak, dukandaaron ka zaum dhha deyn*
Who knows when the poor consumers would cut the traders to size

3/iv *Na jaane kis din kharrosh foujain, nizaame nau ka alam utha deyn*
Who knows when the silent armies raise the banner of a New Order

3/v *Nizaame nau ka jo sayl roke majaal-diwar-o-dar nahi hai*
Is there any to resist the rising tide of the New Order

3/vi *Jo waqt nazdeek aa raha hai kisi ko iski khabar nahi hai.*
Who knows what times are in store

Historic Brad-laugh Hall

I ventured to see something more in Lahore. Skirting Bhaati Gate, the oldest gate of the Walled City, the area originally settled by the Bhatti Rajputs who had converted to Islam, I reached Brad-laugh Hall, once the headquarters of the Punjab Congress Committee. Its foundation stone was laid by Shri Surendra Nath Banerji, the Congress President during 1895-1902 and dedicated to Charles Brad-laugh (1833-91), the prominent politician of England, a great champion of noble causes including Indian self government. Brad-laugh was a great secularist and a confirmed atheist. When elected to the British Parliament he refused to take the oath on the Bible. As a result, his seat was declared vacant. In re-election he was again elected from the same constituency. Ultimately, his argument that an atheist too had the right to be a member of Parliament was accepted and he was allowed to take the oath on solemn affirmation.

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It was in this Brad-laugh Hall of Lahore that in1923, the IIIrd session of the All India Trade Union Congress was held under the presidentship of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Prominent Congress and Khilafat leaders present at the session included Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Bi Amma, mother of Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali).

I had attended many a meeting held in the Brad-laugh Hall during my student days before partition.

In this complex was established the National College after Gandhiji gave a clarion call for the boycott of Government and Government-aided educational institutions in the early twenties. Bhagat Singh was one of the students enrolled in that college. At that time Professor Chhabil Das was the principal. Gandhiji had once presided over the convocation of that college.

Gandhi, Nehru and others, each one of them had addressed meetings in this hall. After partition, a Congress Muslim family of Amritsar sought shelter in this huge complex. I had gone there to meet a member of that family. Earlier, he had met me at Delhi. I found the main complex turned into a technical institute.

That evening the journalists of the daily newspaper *"Mashriq"* had arranged a dinner for me in a restaurant near the famous *Lakshmi Chowk*. The statue of *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth, had been burnt and destroyed after the partition. At the dinner the friends stressed the need to forget the old bitterness following partition and to improve relations between the two countries.

Gita Bhavan

Walking on the Nisbet Road one afternoon, I passed by the *Gita Bhawan*. This huge building was constructed by Sewak Ram son of the famous engineer - philanthrophist Sir Ganga Ram. I was reading the message of the Gita engraved in the Devnagri script outside the wall,

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्।।

परित्राणाय साधूनाम विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे*।।

* In 1987, during my second visit, this message of Gita had already been erased

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When *dharam* declines, and *adharam* flourishes,
I give myself birth, to restore balance.
And every age witnesses my birth;
I come to protect the good, and destroy the wicked,
I come to re-establish *dharam*.

(Translated by P. Lal)

Urdu in Roman script

Tannazal pe jis waqat aata hai dharam
Adharam aa-ke karta hai bazaar garam
Yeh andher jab dekh paata hoon mein
Janam le ke dunia mein aata hu mein

(Translated by Khawaja Dil Mohammad)

when suddenly somebody put his hand on my shoulder.

Wails of the victims of Zia Shahi

When I turned my face towards a small group, one of them said, "We represent journalists and other employees of the Urdu daily '*Musawaat*', the Pakistan People's Party organ, closed down by General Zia's military dictatorship. We knew of your arrival. We were in search of you. We were heading for the *Mashriq* office and have instead, found you out here". "But how did you recognise me"? I enquired.

Another of the group explained " I had heard that you had put on an overcoat and were sporting a fur cap, carrying a baton under your arm and you were moving around Lahore. Suddenly, we observed someone in the same dress at the *Gita Bhawan* and concluded that 'Here is Mr. Santosh Kumar'. They reported, "Who knows how many suffering newspaper employees including journalists like us are on the streets, running from pillar to post? There is none to extend a helping hand to us. In the beginning, our union, and, in fact, all the unions of the newspaper employees had tried their best to see that the newspaper *Musawaat* resumes publication but in this vicious atmosphere there is none to listen to the wails of the helpless."

They continued to add details of their difficulties. I tried to convince them that whatever action was needed to change the situation had to be carried out here. I further advised them to intensify the struggle and do whatever the situation demanded and the circumstances permitted.

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I had already heard the fate that had befallen the journalists and non journalists of the *Musawaat*. I also knew from personal experience as to how the workers face difficulties at the time of long strikes and lock-outs. Even the near and dear ones stay away. Those who meet you every day now turn their faces away.

Seeing me in tears, their eyes also became moist and they stopped their narration of deprivation and sufferings. I could not hold out any promise of help to them and could only express the wish that the powers that be, may study the reasons of the rise and fall of the regimes and return to the path of reason.

With wet eyes, we took leave of each other.

Moving through the famous Anarkali bazaar and roaming about the Golbagh, I remembered the turbulent days when huge processions of nationalist students raised full throated slogans of

Up Up the National Flag
Down Down the Union Jack

***

Freedom is our birth right
And we shall have it

***

Also : Toady bachha : Hai Hai

In the Golbagh had once stood the statue of *Sher-e-Punjab* (Lion of Punjab) Lala Lajpat Rai. After partition, one finger of this statue of a *kafir* (infidel) was broken by the bigots. On the intervention of Lala Gopi Chand Bhargava, the first Chief Minister of East Punjab, the statue was brought to Simla, the first capital of the Indian Punjab. After repairs, it was installed on the famous Ridge of the once summer capital of the British Indian Empire.

During one evening that I was spending some time with a senior government official who had migrated from India, he warmed up and then raising his hands, almost cried out:

Hamare buzurgon ne yeh kya faisle kar diye. (What sort of decisions did our elders take?) Both of us had tears in our eyes. We changed the subject.

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3

After spending four days in Lahore, I left for Karachi by the train, named *Tez Ro*, in a III class compartment. I found an elderly gentleman sitting next to me. After a brief conversation I discovered that both of us were Lahoris. On his part he expressed the joy on knowing that I was born in Lahore and had come to the city after 33 years. We spoke the same colloquial of Lahore. He told me that earlier he ran a shop in the *Mochi Gate* area. Now they had moved into the Shah Alami market. He said, "Believe me, my association with Hindu neighbours had turned me into a vegetarian. Of course, on the *Bakrid Day* I would always cffer *Qurbani* (animal sacrifice)". Then he referred to the monthly *Mastana Jogi*, the popular magazine of Lahore and its prominent editor Sufi Lachhman Parshad. Reminiscencing about the pre-partition days, Bhatti Sahib, my travelling companion, remarked that the *Mastana Jogi* always carried very interesting and informative articles. He wanted to know whether Sufi Sahib was still alive and if so, where was he living. When I informed him that Sufi Sahib had died a few years back, he felt it was a personal loss. I further informed him that Sufi Sahib had settled down in Delhi after partition and after his death the magazine continued to be published by his son. He expressed a desire to have some old copies of the magazine. I wrote down his name and address. On return to Delhi I contacted Sufi Sahib's son Shri Bhatnagar and conveyed the request from Bhatti Sahib. Bhatnagar Sahib sent me a few old copies which were duly forwarded to Lahore. Bhatti Sahib acknowledged the receipt of the parcel with grateful thanks.

On the morning of 19 December, the train reached Nawaab Shah, a railway station in Sindh. At that time elections were being held for the railway workers union. The train stopped at the station for a few minutes and I got down to have a feel of the atmosphere. Every wall of the station was plastered with posters carrying the slogan "Mirza Ibrahim Zindabad". Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim was the leading light of the trade union movement in the railways since before the partition. I had heard him at public meetings in Lahore. He was a contemporary of V.V. Giri, the well-known trade union leader who later on became the President of India.

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As the train steamed, I asked those sitting in the compartment if there were any *nawaab* left in this country. The young man sitting opposite said that the former princely states stood merged in Pakistan and there remained no *nawaab* any more. However, another passenger joined issue by asking, "**What about the big *nawaab* holding a big axe?**" Everybody understood the meaning and the compartment reverberated with spontaneous laughter. Obviously, reference was to General Zia ul Haque, the military dictator who had overthrown the elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in 1977 and later hanged him.

A young couple was sitting on the berth opposite. The husband belonged to Tandu Adam (Sindh) and the wife to Gujranwala (Pakistani Punjab). The young lady looked at my suitcase and gazed at my visiting card in Urdu pasted on it. She whispered into the ear of her husband obviously conveying to him that this passenger with the name Santosh Kumar is a Hindu from India. The eyes of the Sindhi husband lit up and requested me to show Indian coins if I had any. I put my hand into my pocket and took out a 50 paise coin which carries the picture of a young couple holding a tricolour, with Parliament House in the background. This coin was cast to mark the silver jubilee of Indian independence. I gave the coin to the Sindhi. He and his wife were pleased to receive it.

After this acquaintance amongst us, the Punjabi wife of the Sindhi husband asked, "*Aap ke pass koi Indian note hai*" (Are you carrying any Indian currency note?). I took out a 10 rupee note from my wallet, wrote down the names of the couple and handed over the same to them, duly autographed. On seeing the currency note, the wife remarked "What is written in so many languages"? I explained that India is a multi-lingual country and each currency note carries its value in 15 languages in different scripts. The couple accepted the currency note as a souvenir from India.

In Karachi

I reached Karachi in the afternoon of 19 December 1980. Bhai Abdul Rashid *Rustam Qalam*, (Master of Calligraphy in Arabic and Persian scripts), my host in Karachi, was present at the railway station along with a friend Ghulam Nabi Bazmi to receive me. I had met Abdul Rashid in Delhi. Originally, he belonged to Uttar Pradesh and had come to

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visit his hometown after 30 years. I got down from the train and my host and his friend hugged me affectionately. We left the railway station by taxi and reached Korangi, a colony in the suburbs of Karachi, built for the *muhajirs* from India. As we reached the house, the *muazzin's* call for the evening prayers from the nearby mosque was heard. The family considered it a good omen. The morning papers in Karachi had reported that an Indian journalist active in the working journalists movement was visiting at the invitation of *Rustam Qalam*. (Master of Calligraphy).

A number of people started visiting the house of my host. Among them was one Kamaal Hussain *Kamaal*.

Here I wish to describe a few reminiscences of my meeting with *Kamaal*. He was a *muhajir* from India and was involved in political work in Karachi. *Kamaal's* life was full of struggle. He had been through trials and tribulations for his convictions which were opposed to the establishment of Pakistan. *Kamaal* had been inspired by the life of *Sheikh-ul-Hind* Maulana Mehmood-al-Hassan, co-founder of *Darul Ulum*, Deoband, a great seat of Islamic learning. Mehmood-al-Hassan was arrested and exiled to Malta by the British authorities for preaching a permanent *jehad* against the *farangi iqtidar* (European Christian power / domination). Later on, *Kamaal* was influenced by the life and work of *Sheikh-ul-Arab-o-Al Ajam*, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, president of Jamiat-ul-Ulama-e-Hind for years. Then he joined the ranks of Maulana Shabir Ahmed Usmani. Madni was against partition. Usmani was for Pakistan. The third change of heart brought him near to Mufti Mehmood. At the time of my visit to Karachi in 1980, he was looking forward.

Kamaal Hussain *Kamaal* felt that since the inception of Pakistan, the ruling clique had been directing their efforts at weakening the real concept of Islamic State in Pakistan. This policy of the rulers was the legacy of the British period and in the Muslim League, there were large elements loyal to the British.

Kamaal adds – Under the influence of such elements, Pakistan was driven into the lap of America. The culture imported from America put the young generation on the path of consumerism which was bound to end in sexism and immorality. The administration of the State had totally passed into the hands of the bureaucracy, created by the British

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during their rule. Under the constitution of 1956, a nexus of *jagirdari*, capitalism and bureaucracy had been created which was ruling over the people of Pakistan under the label of Islam. *Kamaal* said, "Within ten years of the foundation of Pakistan, its constitutional and political future had turned totally bleak. The spectre of communism was created and Pakistan's security was sought under the umbrella of America. Islam had become a toy in the hands of Pakistani rulers. There was not a ray of hope for the country and the *millet* (muslim community). A situation had developed wherein the successors to Maulana Shabir Ahmed Usmani (a muslim divine who broke from the ranks of Maulana Azad and Maulana Madni, the great supporters of United India and joined hands with Mr. Jinnah in the hope of establishing an Islamic State of Pakistan) were pre-occupied with personal problems. To fill up the frightening void existing under prevailing conditions, Usmani's lieutenants Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori, Maulana Mufti Mehmud and Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazaarvi joined hands and organised *Ulama-e-Haq*. They deeply felt that to remain aloof from politics any more would be committing the unpardonable sin of throwing Pakistan into the lap of *kufr i.e.*, infidelity. The formation of Jamiat-ul-Islam was the result of their efforts". I asked whether the way the Jamiat-ul-Islam made efforts to usher in real Islam and the method adopted to help the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haque to overthrow and execute the elected prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was considered justified by them. He remained speechless for long.

We changed the subject. After a while taking leave, Kamaal Sahib presented me his book entitled "*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ne barre- sagheer Pak-o-Hind (Bangladesh) ke barey me kya kaha tha*" (What had Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said about the sub-continent of Pak-Hind (Bangladesh). The year of publication was 1973. The first chapter opens with the remarks "After 25 years, the history of Pakistan started changing and during those 25 years, the political map of south-east Asia has totally changed. The recent changes in the sub-continent and Pakistan have revived the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It is being heard in many quarters that whatever the Maulana had prophesied was coming true." 'The Muslims of Pakistan are passing through a period of extreme mental agony and great pain. All their hopes have been dashed to the ground, one by one. Within a short span

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of 25 years they have lost half of their national existence after the formation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the rest is witnessing the emerging contours of territorial and ethnic differences. The ideological colossus of the *milli wahdat* (muslim national unity) has been reduced to dust by the historical and political events of the partition of India and the second partition of Pakistan."

The book goes on to say: "In this connection the greatest mental and physical loss has been suffered by those Muslims who lived in the Hindu majority provinces of United India and were in the forefront of the struggle for the attainment of Pakistan. After the partition, they, in millions, left their ancestral hearths and homes to cross over to Pakistan (the Land of the Pure). After 25 years of homelessness and nomadic life in West Pakistan and now the separation of East Pakistan has rendered their future uncertain, once again. The land they live on today, seems slipping from under their feet. They bemoan their past, cry over their present and feel worried about the future. And they want to know whether the thoughts of Abul Kalam contain any prescription for their ills."

After *Kamaal* had left, I was told by my friends that the above mentioned book on the sayings of Maulana Azad about Pakistan had been proscribed by the Pakistan Government. I made no enquiries.

In Karachi Press Club

On 21 December 1980, I went to the Karachi Press Club at the invitation of some journalists. There was a large gathering of the journalists of Karachi's English, Urdu and Sindhi newspapers as well as those representing the press in Rawalpindi, Lahore and other cities. They were the leaders of the journalists and other newspaper employees' unions functioning across Pakistan. The big hall of the Club was packed to capacity. To accommodate the overflow some more chairs were added. Even then some kept standing. I was welcomed there warmly by the leaders including Minhaj Barna and Abdul Hameed Chhapra, the principle functionaries of the working journalists and other newspaper employees movement.

The journalists asked questions about the working conditions of the Indian working journalists and other newspaper employees.

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One question was "During the emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Indian press also came under censorship. What was your stand at that time?" I explained the stand of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists and told them that we had at once demanded the lifting of the censorship and reiterated our demand in every meeting. And, I reminded them of the fate befalling Mrs. Gandhi as a result of the imposition of emergency. She lost power after a defeat in the elections held in 1977.

From left: Santosh Kumar, Minhaj Barna and Abdul Hameed Chhapra at the Karachi Press Club

Some Pakistani journalists praised Mrs. Gandhi for calling the elections and abiding by the verdict which went against her. Another journalist stood up and explained: "This much credit must go to Mrs. Gandhi that she called the elections and once defeated, handed over power to her opponent, Mr. Morarji Desai without any second thought and Mrs. Gandhi displayed a high sense of democratic culture when she sent a message of good wishes to the new prime minister, Morarji Desai. Without doubt, the story of Mrs. Gandhi's rise and fall and her rise again mirrors and testifies the democratic temper of the Indian state. However, who is going to order elections here"?

I asked that if for the sake of argument elections are called here and the military dictator President Zia-ul-Haque also nominates his candidates then what would be the likely result? The Pakistani journalist repeated my question and said, "Please remember that our President is a very intelligent person. He

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has not been bitten by a mad dog to choose the path of self-destruction by ordering and ensuring fair elections."

Before the lunch started a journalist took me outside and said, "You find corruption everywhere. It is no less in India. Police is corrupt everywhere but here due to martial law, the army officers have also become corrupt. According to one estimate 60% of army officers are corrupt and, in fact, it is they who serve as pillars of the Martial Law President Gen. Zia-ul-Haque. The same journalist made a reference to Bhutto regime and said, "Agreed, Bhutto was *makkaar* (deceitful), but this autocrat Zia has proved to be the killer of his benefactor. He would be counted among the cursed ones. However, the more shameful thing is that the muslim divines of the day while feeling satisfied at the removal of *makkaar* Bhutto, have helped impose an autocrat on the people. Some other journalist also came out to the lawn and said, "Day and night we are told that this thing has happened in that part of India and that thing in another part. Daily agitations are the characteristic of Indian politics. The official propaganda in Pakistan gives the impression that India is a picture of mismanagement and Pakistan is the land of peace. If we consider the situation dispassionately, we find that the agitations are the life of democratic India. And how do you find the conditions here? Every thing shut down. The whole *millet* (muslim community) chained. The army officers acting as judges do not know even the ABC of law. The Chief Martial Law Administrator proposes and the judicial officer under him disposes. Every morning a new order of the day is issued and sometimes, the same is modified twice a day. Pakistan has witnessed many interesting governments but nobody had ever thought that the state would be brought to such a pass. The present experiment has shaken up the intellectuals of the country."

After the meeting in the Press Club, I visited the office of the Urdu daily *"AMAN"* (PEACE) run by journalists as a co-operative venture. Some of them had originally hailed from India. During conversation a journalist said, "All have realised their individual worth. The war mongers have gone and so also the vultures of history – not only in India and Pakistan but all over the world, at large. How much the country is burdened with the cost of preparation for a war and how much destruction is the result. Now peace and peace alone is needed. Some other Pakistani journalist suggested that India and Pakistan should take a pledge that they would never go to war against each other. Whatever the problems, war is

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no answer to them. If they realise this, well and good for both". I agreed hundred percent with the worthy thoughts and sentiments expressed by the friends and assured them that the journalists should never use their pen to call for any talk of war between the two countries to settle disputes. The crusade against the forces of vice shall continue and we would continue our efforts to transform tanks into tractors.

I spent that night in Karachi at the house of Mr. Bashir-ul-Hasan Khan, situated in North Nazimabad. I had met him earlier at Delhi while on his way to Patna, his birth place.

Meeting a Scholar

In the morning, a professor learning of my presence in the city reached my host's house. Professor Mohamad Sabir, compiler of the first ever Turki-Urdu dictionary, had come to present a copy of the same to me. Professor Sabir originally belonged to Allahabad and had migrated to Karachi after the partition. He was interested in the study of Turki language and had proceeded to Ankara to acquire proficiency in that language. He also presented to me a copy of his monograph on Bairam Khan, the senior confidant of Humayun and later on Regent and Prime Minister of Akbar. Prof. Sabir's monograph on Bairam Khan is full of information. Himself a *Shia*, when Bairam Khan sought refuge for Humayun at the court of the *Safvis* of Persia, the ruler Tehmasap asked him to advise Humayun to accept *Shiaism*. Bairam Khan thought over the question and replied to the Persian ruler with amiable diplomatic finesse, not to mind the personal beliefs of Humayun. Later he told the mughal fugitive that if he wished to regain the throne of Delhi, he could consider the advice of the Persian King to accept *Shiaism*.

Specific Complaint of Torture

During my stay in Karachi I also met some political workers. They started their tirade against the military regime. I reminded them that I had already heard a lot about all that. It would be better if they made a specific complaint. One of them narrated the following episode:

In early August 1980, on the direction of Gen. Zia-ul-Haque and the Military Governor of Sindh, the Special Department – the Field Investigation Unit - arrested five workers of the Communist Party of Pakistan in Karachi. All of them were taken to the Special Investigation Centre established at

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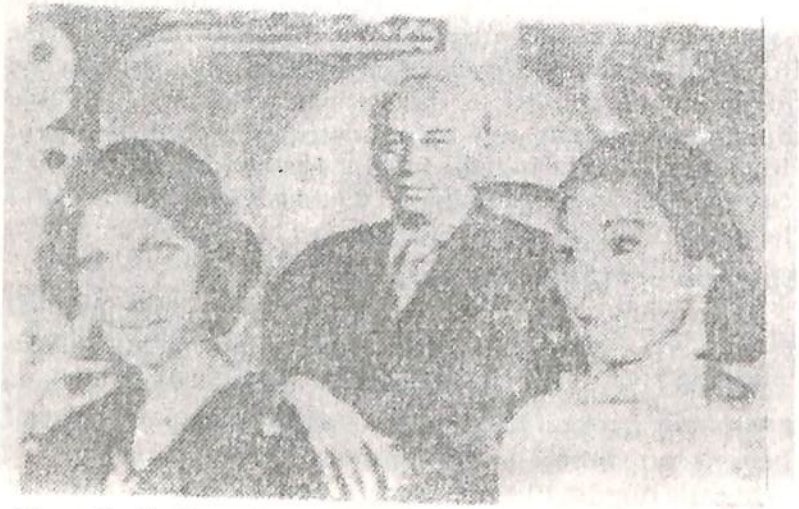
Maripur Airport in Karachi. They were tortured. As a result of the third degree methods adopted to secure confession, Nazeer Abassi, a member of the Central Committee of the Party died on 11 August 1980. The army in order to hide its crime refused to hand over the body to his relatives but declared it as unclaimed and buried it.

During the consideration of the writ petition filed by Hamida Abassi, the widow of the murdered comrade, in the High Court, the Government counsel argued that Nazeer Abassi had died a natural death. However, during the summary proceedings recorded in the court about the recovery of the dead body and the *post mortem*, the police constable and the inspector gave contradictory statements. Abassi's widow registered an FIR wherein she named Zia-ul-Haque and the Sindh Governor amongst the murderers of her husband. But nothing tangible was disclosed as to what had happened relating to the circumstances of his death. A convention of lawyers, leaders of different political parties and intellectuals protested against this act of savagery. However, the Pakistani media did not print a line". I thanked the friends and took leave.

On the way, I spotted a vendor selling a picture postcard of Bhutto family. I purchased one*:



From Left : Ms. Nusrat Bhutto, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Ms. Benazir Bhutto

* Later on I was informed that the pubication and ciruculation of this picture had been banned by Gen. Zia. I mad no enquiries.

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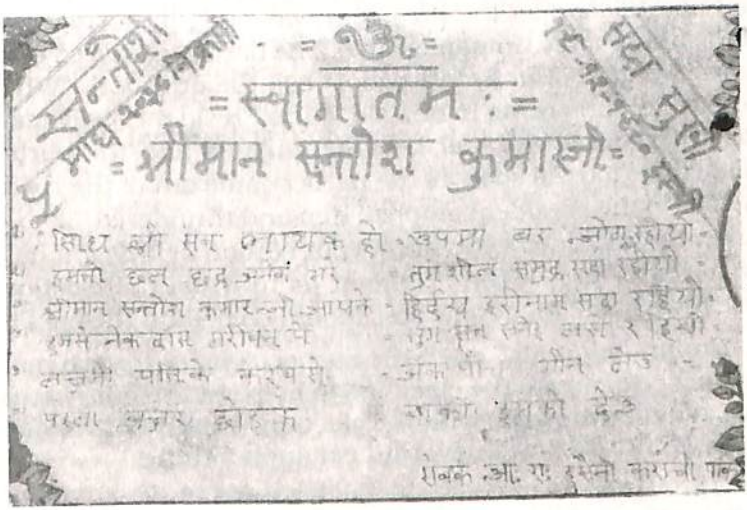
Pleasant Surprise

During my 4-day stay in Karachi in December 1980, a number of receptions were organised. One of the most memorable was the one where members of the cultural organisation Anjumane Hussaini explained to me their problems. Most of those present there belonged to Awadh – the ancient part of present Uttar Pradesh where Awadhi language reigns supreme. The great epic Valmiki Ramayan in Sanksrit, was rendered in Awadhi by the great poet Tulsi so that the common people understood each and every scene of the epic. Of course, Persian was the court language of the Shia *Nawaabs* of Oudh with its capital first at Faizabad and then Lucknow but the people at large, spoke awadhi.

The Awadhi speaking people attending the reception complained that awadhi had been completely ignored by the Pakistani officers migrating from Awadh because they considered Urdu as their mother tongue and consider Awadhi, a dialect spoken by the plebeians. It was a pleasant surprise that even after so many years of partition, they had not abandoned their mother tongue.

I was visibily moved when I found that the Welcome Address presented to me and reproduced hereunder, was in Awadhi in Nagri script.


= स्वागतम् :=
= श्रीमान सन्तोश कुमारजी =

I remembered that my kind friend, the late Sayyad Sajjad Zaheer, son of Sayyad Wazir Hassan, former Chief

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Justice of the Awadh High Court, used to tell me that notwithstanding the adoption of Urdu by the elite of the UP Muslims, Awadhi continued to be the main language of the people.

Journey from Karachi to Lahore

The return journey by train from Karachi to Lahore was quite uncomfortable for the simple reason that, into a III class compartment with a capacity of 72 passengers more than 200 had entered. Despite winter, the atmosphere was suffocating. I espied three young men perched on the upper tier speaking the colloquil Punjabi in Lahori accent. I introduced myself to them. They were very pleased to meet me. We hugged each other. And they took me under their charge. They not only provided me enough room to breathe a little but also sought to enliven the atmosphere by their jokes.

Jokes about the Military Dictator

One of them started: "*Sahibaan* (kind friends), I will not reveal the name of the subject of this story. May you come to know that by yourself. Once he summoned a barber for a hair-cut. The barber found the hair too sticky, not easy to cut. What to do, he asked himself. He thought for a while and then politely said, 'President Sahib, when are the elections to be called'? Hearing this the President flew into a rage and his hair stood erect. The barber put the scissors to work and cut a part of the hair. As soon as the President was back to normal, the hair again became unmanageable. The barber enquired once again, "*Janab Sadar Sahib*, people ask the question, "When are the elections going to be held"? The President once again looked ferocious, the hair became unglued and the barber finished his job. As soon as the barber came out of the room, an ADC to the President stopped him and thundered, "You, a barber by caste, don't you know your station in life? you have the audacity to ask the President as to when the elections were to be held? Right now you should be behind the bars".

"No Sir, not at all," cried the barber. "Please forgive me. I was just referring to the elections to help cut the hair. In any case, what have I to do with the election? Please forgive me. I swear, in future, I will never repeat such a thing."

Another Joke

One evening the whole family of a Brigadier was watching the T.V. News programme. It was a normal

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feature to show the President for a couple of minutes every evening, inaugurating a function, addressing an army unit or receiving some foreign dignitary. That evening the President just disappeared from the screen after a minute or so. The brigadier got puzzled, "What is wrong, the President disappearing just after a minute and a half?" His wife replied, "Cartoons look good for a minute or so".

The train reached Lahore in the afternoon of 23 December. It had been raining throughout the journey and it was freezing cold in the ordinary III class compartment in which I was travelling.

Last day in Lahore

While in Karachi, I had learnt that a large number of my well wishers had been waiting for my return to Lahore. They also knew that I had to spend the last night in Lahore before my return to Delhi on 24 December. I was also given the address where they would be waiting for me that evening. I reached the appointed place and was greeted warmly by them. Truly, they were courageous ones but helpless under the prevailing conditions. When I enquired from one of them whether such and such friends, living in exile may return, he retorted, "What are you talking, asking for their return, the fact is that we wish that we could acquire wings and fly away from Pakistan".

Another added, "Do you know how many are languishing in jails in Pakistan. Only, the well-known are remembered, who remembers the unknown soldier? Today, countless workers are in the clutches of the so-called Islamic rules and regulations imposed by the Martial Law regime. We don't think that the efforts, to bring back real Islam at the point of the gun instead of the sermon, will now succeed. However, these efforts are really debasing Islam in the eyes of the civilised world."

The third interjected, "The economic condition of the country is deteriorating to such an extent that the nation cannot be run without administering a daily dose of the opium of religion to the people." He went on to say, "the treasury has been emptied. Even to meet the day to day expenditure, the shops, big as well as small, are being raided and money extorted. It is a reign of terror. The big cities look ghost towns. The commercial banks owned by Habib, Adamji, Haroons and other money bags are going on advancing loans to the government so that the present

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dispensation continues and they are permitted to loot the people." He further revealed that the Security Press had hastily printed currency notes with wrong numbers. Some of these had been withdrawn while others overstamped with correct numbers."

"Do you mean to say", I wanted to know "that the people will remain content with the daily dose of Islam and the present dispensation will continue?"

"No, this situation will not remain the same forever," another friend asserted firmly, "conditions shall change". "The question is whether change will take place from the top or from below." "What I mean is,"he continued, "whether like Iran, a people's movement will force the authoritarian ruler to abolish the medieval system here or to seek exile; or a group of good intentioned army officers will remove the suppressor and shoo away the *mullahs* from the realm of the state and take up cudgels to modernise it."

"It is evident," he added "the intellectuals are fed up with the present state of suffocation but they lack the strength to change the system, on their own. And the masses which bring about revolution, are not yet organised. Let some Kamaal (Kamaal Ata-turk, Founder of modern Turkey) descend upon the scene and take it from me, people will be ready to side with him, to stand by him, for the present, it is difficult to say what is in store during the next few months. The Autocrat will remain in power though the regime will not be stable."

I asked about the people's attitude towards India. At this the same comrade who had initiated the conversation said, "Well, so far we are concerned we have always been the standard-bearers of India-Pak friendship. Now, even the masses have realised that India is a very big country. Pakistan is no comparison to India. Now, if there is a war then this country may even lose its existence. Under the circumstances there is no open enemity with India. Yes, some bigots and fanatics, even now raise the cry of Kashmir but everybody knows it, in his heart of hearts, that the matter has been disposed of, and we should be content with what we have, and to preserve what we have, we must restore democracy".

After an hour or so, as I was taking leave, one of them shouted, "Do you know what has been the biggest

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achievement of the Pakistani army?" Amazed, I looked at him waiting for his own answer, "Don't you know", he said, "that the greatest achievement of the Pakistani army is that it has occupied its own country by the imposition of Martial Law"? What a remark, mirroring tragedy.

Last Evening with *the Ulama*

The same evening in Lahore, before leaving for Delhi, I spent some time with Maulana Abu Mohammad Al-Qasmi and his friends at his *Madrasa Islamia*, Gulberg. He had met me earlier in Delhi when he had come to attend the centenary celebrations of *Darul Ulum*, Deoband. He was an alumunus of the great institution of Islamic learning whose pioneers had preached and propagated *jehad* against the *firangis*. He took me to the room, specially renovated for me if I chose to stay there, as his guest. "There are many who would like to meet you", he said, "although it is pretty late, however, let me try to contact a few. Some of them may turn up."

After a little while, about half a dozen came to his *madrasa*.

One elderly person said, "We have come to know that 20 thousand mosques and graveyards are under illegal occupation in Indian Punjab. What is this?"

I explained, "Let us remember that there are functioning *Waqf* Boards in Haryana, Punjab and Delhi and there is not even one mosque or cemetery under the illegal possession of any non-muslim". I told him that if only he could provide me a list, I would try to enquire. However, it is not fair to first presume something and then hurl accusations. I asked him to pass on the list to me, if there was any. He could provide none.

The same maulana then said: "We hear that the first and the second manuscript of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's commentary on *Quran*, *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, lost during Maulana's arrests, searches and seizures during the British rule, has since been recovered. I assured those present there that on return to Delhi, I would enquire into the matter. The reference to the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, Maulana's masterpiece, revived memories of my youth in Lahore before partition when in this city I had read *Mazameen-e-Azad*, *Khutbaat-e-Azad*, and some old files of *Al-Hilal* and *Tazkra*, the autobiography of Maulana Azad,

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written at the age of 29 and had set out in search of this masterpiece, *Tarjuman-ul-Quran.*

The maulana conversing with me, belonged to the school which had broken away from the school of common nationalism and whose *Ulama*, in order to establish an Islamic State in Pakistan, had deserted Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and accepted Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah as their *Quaid-i-Azam.* They were the ones who after the establishment of Pakistan, issued a *fatwa* for *jehad* (holy war) for conquering Kashmir. Also they were the people who had laboured ceaselessly for framing Islamic constitution and Islamic laws. "What an irony of fate", the ulama told me that those who were in the forefront in the struggle for Pakistan, even their honest opinion could not be published in the press today. Each one of our statements is censored."

On my last day in Lahore, before leaving for the border, I visited the offices of the *Mashriq* again for thanking the journalists for all the courtesies extended and the love and affection showered upon me during me ten day stay in Pakistan. Enjoying tea in the lawn, a journalist took me aside. He whispered into my ear, "You are returning to Delhi. Please tell the Lady (Prime Minister Indira Gandhi) that this man (Gen. Zia-ul-Haque) lacks legitimacy. He should not be encouraged. He should not be invited (to India) nor should she visit this country at his invitation. Pakistani people consider Mrs. Gandhi a great epoch making personality. They won't like that this usurper of power in Pakistan enjoys the benefit of closeness to her. Yes, let this Autocrat restore democracy here, form his political party, hold elections and win and then when he invites her to Pakistan, no body will raise any objection. However, so long as his authority rests on brute force, encouraging him will not raise Mrs. Gandhi's stature in the eyes of the Pakistanis". When I tried to take leave of him, that gentleman started repeating his earlier words. "You are returning to Delhi. Please tell the Lady that this man lacks legitimacy. He should not be encouraged. He should not be invited (to India) nor should she visit here."

The same afternoon I reached Amritsar by bus from Wagah, the last border post of Pakistan.

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October, 1987

SECOND VISIT

When I visited Pakistan for the second time in October 1987, the military dictatorship under General Zia-ul-Haque had been transformed into a presidential form of government. This cosmetic change had been achieved through a referendum organised by the military regime itself where the voter was asked to vote for *Nizame-Mustafa* (Islamic State). Along with this farce, another farce was enacted by calling elections to the national and provincial assemblies on non-party basis. In this cosmetic change the post of a prime minister was created and it was occupied by Mr. Mohammad Khan Junejo, a thorough gentleman belonging to the landed aristocracy of Sindh.

As soon as I crossed the Indian border on foot, carrying my suit case and entered the Pakistani area, I sighted my old journalist friend, Umar Saleem, chief reporter of a Zia government controlled newspaper *Mashriq*, published from four cities in Pakistan. Earlier, I had informed him of my date and time of arrival at the border. Within seconds all formalities were over. I thanked the customs staff for the courtesies extended to me and the friend drove me down the Grand Trunk Road.

Driving past the Shalimar Bagh built by Shah Jehan on the pattern of the famous Shalimar Bagh of Srinagar designed by his father Jehangir, I observed something I had hardly ever imagined. As the readers are aware India has renamed National Highway No. 1 upto the border as Sher Shah Suri Marg, to honour the India-born Afghan, who had expelled the Mughals from India, who reformed, or rather overhauled, the agrarian system with the help of Todar Mal and had also laid a highway from Sahasram, his birthplace in Bihar upto Kabul, to help develop mercantile capitalism.

There in Lahore, Grand Trunk Road has been renamed after Mehmud Ghazanavi.

Politely, I asked my friend, "Who was Ghazanavi?" For sixteen long years, he did not annex Punjab lest he becomes responsible for the maintenance of law and order. He just carried out yearly raids. I continued, "A raider cannot be hailed as a hero". He explained that even now

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people called it G.T. Road. Nobody calls it Shahrah-e-Ghazanavi, the new name.

From the Shalimar Bagh, once in ruins and now spruced up, to Kucha Aurangzeb earlier known as Kucha Kali Mata in the Gumti bazaar area of the walled city, where I stayed with Umar Saleem, hundreds of multi-coloured posters were to be seen. They had been strung across the streets to welcome Benazir Bhutto who had visited the city a few days earlier.

Each shop seemed to have displayed them passionately. In December 1980, there was suffocation in the air. In October 1987, the fluttering of banners itself indicated a change.

I met a number of journalists. I found opinion divided on the future of the State of Pakistan. One view was that the present party-less lame democracy may lead to full-fledged parliamentary form of government after the next elections scheduled for 1990.

The other view was that the present arrangement was a ploy of the Reagan Administration to silence critics at home, that the American democracy was aiding a non-democratic Pakistan – and that as soon as the public opinion in Pakistan asserted for a fuller democratic form, Martial Law would be imposed again and Zia or any other general would take over.

The journalists in Lahore were also outspoken in saying that a number of members of Punjab Assembly were criminals. Cases were pending against some of them. They were there because it was party-less elections and the Pakistan Peoples Party had boycotted them. So the criminals belonging to this or that *zamindar* family and with a lot of money to spend, could get elected from the constituencies which had been the pocket boroughs of certain families.

Progressive Lawyers Meet

I attended a meeting of the progressive lawyers in the famous Flettis Hotel of Lahore situated on the *Shahrah-e-Quaid-i-Azam* earlier known as The Mall. The occasion was an election of their forum and quite a few hundred, including a number of woman lawyers, were present. Several lawyers spoke on the occasion. They laid particular stress on the fact that as Punjab had been dominating the political scene since the establishment of Pakistan, the people of other provinces i.e. Sindh, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province,

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had lost confidence in Punjab. Many lawyers took pains to explain that unless the punjabis convinced the national minorities that in any new set up, their interests would be fully safeguarded and their rights constitutionally guaranteed, the future of the country would remain bleak. Restoration of such confidence demanded the restoration and revival of party politics and in the absence of a real national party, coming together of the regional parties and their consensus and agreements on the future set up might help.

The lawyers also demanded restoration of the 1971 Constitution, with certain modifications guaranteeing equal status for all national minorities. After the meeting I met a number of lawyers, separately. No one could say that the present government was constitutional. At best, they would concede that the Junejo administration was an interim one. It may receive a favourable verdict of history only if it delivers the goods in the form of fair election in 1990 on a party basis.

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MEETING A REVOLUTIONARY POET

I spent a long evening with the revolutionary poet Habib *Jaleb*, tortured and tormented by the successive martial law regimes. Listen to some of his couplets:

Habib Jaleb

During the regime of Field Marshal Ayub Khan when a constitution was enforced in 1962:

Woh jo saye mein
har maslahat ke
pale,
Aise dastoor ko,
subeh noor ko
Mein nahi manta, mein nahi jaanta

The laws which are born under expediency,
I reject them, I can't respect them

During General Yahya's regime:

Tum se pehle woh jo ik shakhs,
Yahan takhat nashin thaa,
Usko bhi apne khuda hone kaa
Itna hi yakin thaa !!

Before you also, the man who accupied the throne,
was confident that he, too, was God

During civil war in East Pakistan:

Muhabbat golio se bo rahe hein
Watan ka chehra khoon se dho rahe hein,
Guma tum ko ke rasta kat raha hei
Yakeen mujko ke manzil kho rahe hein,

With the bullets they think they are sowing love,
With blood they are smearing the country's face
They have the illusion that the distance is being covered,
But I know that they have lost the destination

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During Gen. Zia's regime:l

* *Aur sab bhul gaye harfe sadaqat likhna*
Reh gayá kaam hamara hi baghaawat likhna
And all others forgot to write the truth,
We were left alone to voice rebellion

** *Laakh kehte rahe zulmat ko na zulmat likhna*
Ham ne seekha hi nahi pyare ba-ijazat likhna
They may admonish us not to paint tyranny as such
But I have not learnt to be dictated

*** *Ham ne jo bhool ke bhi shah ka qaseeda na likha*
Shaayad aaya isi khubi ki badolat likhna
As I didn't praise the king even in my dream
Perhaps this led me to be a poet

**** *Is se barh kar meri tehsin bhala kya hogi*
Parh ke nakhush hein mera sahib-e– sarwat likhna
What could be better praise for me
That the powers-to-be are annoyed at my writings

***** *Kuchh bhi kehte hein kahein shah ke masaahib Jaleb*
Rang rakhna yahi apna isi surat likhna
Let the courtiers continue their harangue,
But Jaleb, you should be true too yourself

Translated by Hans Raj Ratan

(Poem recited in October 1986, at London where *Jaleb* was honoured with the Sohan Singh Josh award by the Punjabi Progressive Writers Association for his great contribution to Punjabi poetry).

Another poem which was sung from Sialkot to Sindh during Ms. Benazir Bhutto's public meetings:

Darte hein bandookon wale, ik nihati ladki se
Phaile himmat ke ujale, ik nihatti ladki se
These men with the guns are fighting against an unarmed girl
And this little girl has raised the morale

Darre huai hein, marre huai hein, larzida larzida hein
Mullah, taajar, general jyale, ik nihatti ladki se
They are down, they are out, they are shaken up and unsteady

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All these mullahs, traders, and generals are afraid of an unarmed girl

Dekh ke uski surat ko 'jaleb' saari duniya hansti hei
Balwano ko parain hein paale, ik nihati ladki se

Oh Jaleb, He has become the laughing stock of the whole world,
Look at this strongmen, scared of this unarmed girl.

The readers would like to know something more about Habib *Jaleb** (28.2.1928 – 12.3.1993).

His family hailed from Hoshiarpur. Prior to partition, his family stayed in Delhi. He was a student of Anglo-Arabic School, Ajmeri Gate. *Jaleb* migrated to Lahore around 1950-52 and shuttled between Karachi and Lahore. Ultimately, he settled down in Lahore. He was arrested during every martial law regime and subjected to torture. His passport was also confiscated. However, his pen continued to produce popular poetry and has been likened to that of *Nazeer Akbarabadi.*

In the meeting hall of the Karachi Press Club, only two pictures adore the wall. One of Faiz Ahmed *Faiz* and the other of Habib *Jaleb.*

We knew each other since long but had never met before. During my second visit in October 1987, one day he found me out in the *Mashriq* office and took me away to some lawyer's chamber located behind the Lahore High Court. We spent a long evening together. He recited his choicest poetry. In 1988, *Jaleb* visited Delhi but I was out of station and we could not share another sitting

Trade Unions

Now something about the Trade Union movement.

There were at that time i.e. October, 1987, six centres. Three of these, All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions, Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions and the All Pakistan Federation of Labour are affiliated to the ICFTU.

Pakistan Trade Union Federation is affiliated to the WFTU; United Workers Federation was affiliated to none and the National Labour Federation was the front organisation of the Jammate-Islami. In early 1986, six centres formed a joint committee but there had been no occasion for a joint action.

* Nand Kishore Vikram, in is book "Habib Jaleb" has rendered a good account of his personality and poetry.

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After the imposition of Martial Law in Pakistan for the third time on July 5, 1977, the Government encroached upon trade union rights of the workers aggressively. On September 19, 1977, Martial Law regulation 23 was promulgated and strikes were completely banned.

On August 15, 1981, Martial Law regulation 52 was enforced and through this, all unions, organisations, groups or associations of any type in Pakistan International Airlines Corporation were dissolved, their activities banned and Pakistan Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1952 (PESMA) applied, indiscriminately.

Recent victims of this Act had been the employees of the Punjab Urban Transport Service throughout the province of Punjab, Sind Road Transport Corporation in the entire province of Sind except Karachi and the Karachi Transport Corporation. Workers employed in Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) long suffered the tyranny of PESMA.

Through an amendment to the Industrial Relations Ordinance, issued in 1969, by adding new Section 28-A, the right of collective bargaining of approximately 1,00,000 workers employed in banks, financial institutions and insurance corporations had also been abolished.

Labour Policy

On the occasion of the Pakistan Tripartite Labour Conference held in December 1980, the government presented a draft of labour policy aimed at further curtailing the existing, restricted rights of the workers and imposing a number of new restrictions on them. Workers' representatives outright rejected the draft. There had been no tripartite meeting since then and the workers federations, disappointed and, dissatisfied with the cold attitude of the government, jointly reported the matter to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Action Committee hoped that ILO would take suitable steps and put an end to the infringment of trade union rights of the workers in violation of ILO Convention 87, 93 and 154 by the Government of Pakistan.

New Humans – Sub-human

In Lahore, I met a number of scholars. I asked about the state of the education and research in different fields. Pat came the reply "The less said, the better". A number of scholars, who had returned home to serve the motherland had gone back, disappointed and disillusioned. The

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educational institutions had become easy prey for the fundamentalist vendetta and bigotry, the simple reason being that no non-conformist view was tolerated. No book worth the name had been published during the last 40 years.

"Under the circumstances what type of human being is produced here in Pakistan"? I asked. "Sub-human" came the spontaneous reply.

Heroin Culture

Heroin culture was another subject much talked about and I found wall posters everywhere, calling upon the citizens to wage war against the deadly addiction. At a recently held seminar under the auspices of the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board, it was revealed that till the end of 1983, the number of heroin addicts had touched 70,000 although the number was 37,000 at the end of 1982. Another revelation made at the above mentioned seminar was that 20 % of the total addicts were addicted to heroin. The non-availability of liquor in the open market also contributed in no small measure to the spread of heroin consumption.

After a few days stay in Lahore, travelling by an air-conditioned bus I passed through the lush green Sahiwal (Montgomery) area irrigated by the Lower Chenab canal and reached Multan in six hours.

Along the highway I found a number of banners carrying the slogans exhorting people to plant trees, in Urdu, strung across the trees. The most striking message proclaimed:

Ek paird lagaa-e-ae jannat me ghar bana-e-ae
(Plant a tree and ensure a house in the paradise).

Multan, the *Mool Sthan*

Multan stands on the junction of Punjab and Sindh and represents a confluence of different cultures and civilisations. A local historian has described Multan as the *Mool Sthan - meaning Original place* where, in the ages gone by, the Babylonian and Dravidian cultures had intermingled. Later on, Arabs contributed to the evolution of this region's culture.

Here on a mound stood a temple dedicated to Prehlad, son of King Harna Kashyap, who like Namrood of ancient Mesopotemia had ordained that he be worshipped like God. Prehlad, his son, a true believer in the unseen God, refused to obey the command of his father. Enraged, Harna Kashyap decided to teach his son a lesson. He had a sister named

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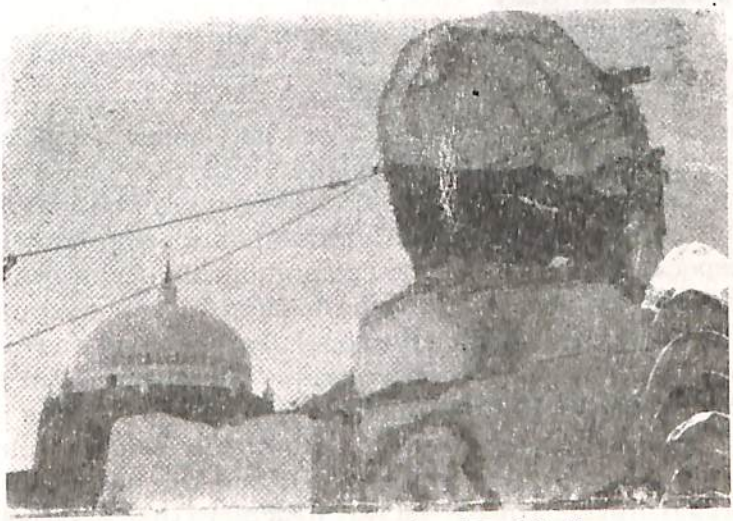
Holika, born with a fire-proof frame of flesh and bones. The King arranged a pyre and asked Holika to mount it with young Prehlad in her lap. A miracle happened. Holika, the wicked one was burnt to ashes and Prehlad survived unharmed. Harna Kashyap, the ferocious God, rose to leap forward to kill Prehlad with his sword but before he could take the leap, his throne fell apart and from the earth appeared *Narsinha Avatar* – half lion and half man incarnation of God, much before Parsu Rama, Rama and Krishna. *Narsinha* killed Harna Kashyap, the self-proclaimed god and delivered the people of the state of intolerance. The popular Indian festival Holi is celebrated every year on the onset of the spring season, to commemorate the victory of Truth over Falsehood,

I spotted the spire of the pre-historic shrine and expressed a desire to visit the *sanctum sanctorum*. Friends told me that the temple was closed since 1947, when the Hindus migrated from the city. Instead, a hostel had been built within the old boundary wall. Off and on, attempts were made to pull down the old temple but the intellectuals and the students of history strongly protested against the intention of the administration.

However, in the aftermath of the demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhaya on 6 December 1992, this ancient temple was pulled down.



Demolished temple of Prehlad

Courtesy: Monthly magazine "The Lord" of Multan

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Temple was A Gold Mine for the Arabs

It may also be interesting to add that when the Arabs conquered Multan in the early eighth century, they did not demolish the temple. Rather, they decided that a part of the offerings made at the fabulously rich shrine by the Indians be regularly deposited in the *Bait-ul-Maal* (Islamic treasury) of the Khalifa. This annual amount far exceeded the amount spent on Qasim-led expedition. So, the temple became a gold mine for the conquerors. True, the Indian rulers of the neighbouring lands did form a confederacy, a number of times, to liberate the temple but each time the Arabs threatened to demolish the shrine if the Indians advanced towards Multan. The Arabs drew a *Lakshman rekha** which the Indians dared not cross.

Saraiki Region In Ferment

During my visit, Multan region was in ferment, the simple reason being the constant complaint that the South Punjab region had been totally ignored during the successive regimes. Now, the people of Multan, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Kot Adu, Khanewal, Kabirwala, Jhang, Sargodha and Rajanpur, who have a distinct language called *Saraiki*, have been agitating for a separate state called *Saraiki*.

No Share in Army

I was informed that the region had no share in the Pakistan army. The people had become very vocal. Their aspirations were finding expression in poetry and writings in *the Saraiki* language which was developing fast. It was the contention of the leaders of the *Saraiki Suba* movement that G.M. Sayyad, Mir Ghous Baksh Bizenjo and Wali Khan, the leaders of Sindh, Baluchistan and the Frontier, respectively, supported the demand of this new province. These leaders were justifying the demand from another angle also. They contended that the population of Punjab was more than the total population of Sindh, Baluchistan and the NWFP, and the leadership of the three provinces was not going to accept any future set up of the country unless equality of provinces was restored and the hegemony of Punjab broken. The easiest way to achieve that goal was to divide Punjab and create *a Saraiki Suba*.

* A circle of forbidden area

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Meeting with Human Rights Activists

I had a long talk with the human rights activists in Multan. They told me that while the number of political prisoners had come down during 1986-87, a good number of them still remained behind the bars. And the question of political exiles still remained unattended. Prominent Pakistanis including Dr. Ghulam Hussain, Qayum Nizami, Dr. Zafar Niazi, Jam Sadiq Ali who later visited Delhi, after his release, Farkhanda Bokhari, Sardar Mazhar Ali, Sardar Khair Bux Murri, Sardar Attaullah Mengal, Qyum Butt, Dr. Feroze Ahmad, Sarfaraz Memon Khattak were living in exile.

During my conversation I was informed that a few thousand Pakistanis were in West Germany alone. The first and the foremost task of the Junejo Government, claiming to restore civilian rule, should have been to extend to the exiles the assurance that they would not be persecuted on the basis of the charges levelled against them during the military rule. In this task the government failed.

The author (in the centre) alongwith friends at the tomb of the Sufi Saint Shams Tabrez of Ismaili Sect, who was skinned alive by a bigot ruler of Multan. On the right is Arif Mahmood Qureshi, a lawyer, who was tortured in the infamous Lahore Fort, under Martial Law.

Meeting A Brave Daughter Of Multan

I had also the privilege to meet a brave daughter of Multan Fakhar-u-nisa Begum who was a 1954 law graduate of Punjab

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University. In spite of being one among the three woman lawyers in Multan, she held her own standing among the male lawyers in the courts. Later on she became a judge of the Lahore High Court. Born of a Chinese mother and a Multani father, she was married to a Mauritian barrister. Fakharu-nisa was the president of the Women's Rights Organisation as well as the president of the Prisoners Release Committee. Talking to me she lamented that the women enjoyed no social or economic security. Her rights as a human being were violated.

One evening, at a small get-to-gather arranged at her house, Fakhar-u-nisa showed me a sandalwood casket with ivory work. It was presented to her by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi when this brave daughter of Multan had met her in Delhi.

The gathering included Ishtiaq Hussain, ambassador to some important country during Bhutto's period. When I took leave of the host and the friends assembled there, Ishtiaq Sahib raised his hands and told me that he had prayed for the success of India's democratic polity.

Qadianis, the new *kafirs*

During my stay in Multan, a Qadiani also known as Ahmadiya or Mirzayi met me to complain that although they had changed the name of their *masjid* to *Ibaadat Khaana* still the building had been demolished thrice and they had to rebuild it again and again.

It may be mentioned here that the executed prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in order to strengthen his regime had yielded to the pressure of the fundamentalist *ulama* to declare the Qadianis as non-muslims. However, it went to the credit of Gen. Zia, who in his efforts to islamise society took concrete steps against the newly declared non-muslims. Under law, the Qadianis were forbidden to recite *Kalma* or to sporting a badge carrying *Kalma*. *The Qadianis*, without doubt, lived in perpetual fear.

Qadianis are the newest sect of Muslims, founded by one Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian, a colony near the town of Batala in Gurdaspur district of Indian Punjab. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed besides claiming the qualities of an oracle, preached collaboration with the English. His argument was that Queen Victoria's Proclamation, after the suppression of the Great Revolt of 1857, had guaranteed full

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freedom of religion and non interferance in religious affairs. Hence, the Indian Muslims should co-operate with the English rule with heart and soul. These thoughts were deeply resented by the *ulama* whose early nineteenth century leader had declared India as a *daarul-herb* and issued a *fatwa* calling upon the Indian muslims to start *jehad* against *the firangi iqtadar* (European domination). On the new Qadiani interpretation of Islam, Poet Iqbal had commented:-

Mullah ko hai jo Hind mai sajde ki ijazat
Nadaan ye samajata hai Islam hai Aazaad
If the Mullah in India is free to offer prayers,
The fool thinks that Islam is free.

This sect was in the forefront of the Pakistan movement. The second-in-command of the sect, in 1947, was Sir Mohammad Zafarullah Khan, a British toady, who became the first external affairs minister of Pakistan.

Zia, a munafiq

I had the opportunity to meet Abu Muavia the son of the late *Ahrar* firebrand Atta-ullah Shah Bukhari. Shah Sahib, as he was respectfully addressed, had a unique personality. An anti-imperialist to the core he used to say very often that half his life had been spent in jail and the other half in the rail.

Although originally belonging to Bihar, Shah Sahib had settled down in Amritsar before the partition. From there he had moved to Multan. He led the anti-Qadiani movement which cost hundreds of lives and ultimately resulted in Qadianis being declared non-muslims during the Bhutto regime. Shah Sahib died and was buried in Multan. There after his son Abu-Muavia continued the anti-Qadiani and anti-Shia crusade. He expressed immense pleasure over my statement that I used to be one of those citizens of Lahore who attended huge public meetings addressed by Shah Sahib in pre-partition days. Armed with axes, the *Ahrar* volunteers would guard the venue of the meetings, in the vast lawns outside Delhi Gate of Lahore, when Shah Sahib denouncing the demand of Pakistan, would call *Quaid-i-Azam*, the *Kafir-e-Azam* in a thundering tone.

Abu Muavia told me that he could appreciate the views of an athiest but could not compromise with the *munafiq* (hypocrite). Since he considered Zia regime *munafiq*, he could

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not support the same. According to him the dispensation headed by General Zia was neither Islamic nor democratic. It was bound to collapse.

In Karachi

After my sojourn in Multan, visiting Karachi again in October 1987, was a unique experience. I reached the Metropolis when it was in the grip of Shia-Sunni riots. However, one could meet people and talk to them. I avoided meeting political leaders. My effort was to get a layman's observation of the situation. However, my presence in Karachi could not remain a secret and a number of representatives of political parties found me out.

A Sindh-Baluch-Pashtoon Front had been founded and was headed by Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, a cousin of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the deposed prime minister executed by Gen. Zia in 1978.

According to this Front, there had been a constant attempt to settle non-Sindhis in Sindh with the sole aim of reducing the Sindhis to a minority in their own province. The Martial Law had created a mess and it would be a very difficult task for any future government to get rid of it.

The Pakistan National Party (PNP) led by the veteran Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo of Baluchistan was of the considered opinion that the root cause of the trouble was the combination of bureaucracy and the army, plotted and engineered during Ghulam Mohammad's prime ministership, through the mechanism of One Unit in West Pakistan headed by Dr. Khan Sahib, the elder brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, to protect it against East Pakistan. Here, it would be interesting to recall that the same Dr. Khan Sahib was the Congress Chief Minister of NWFP at the time of the creation of Pakistan. He was dismissed by the Governor General, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, on 22nd August, 1947, just a week after assuming power, even though the ruling party enjoyed a majority in the Provincial Assembly. Popular sentiments in the Eastern Wing, although enjoying numerical strength even against One Unit, were suppressed and the identy of Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP were sought to be erased. No body at the helm of affairs thought for a while, about giving to the national minorities the rights due to them under any fair dispensation.

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MUHAJIRS DREAM OF A CITY STATE

Karachi is a city of contradictions. The *muhajirs* - those migrating to Pakistan from India – were alienating themselves from the Sindhis. They considered Urdu language as the best in the world and looked down upon Sindhi as a vulgar dialect. The *muhajirs* expressed their pride as the makers of Pakistan, those who had suffered for its creation and it were they who continued to sustain its ideological foundations with their sweat and blood. As the four provinces of Pakistan – Sindh, Punjab, NWFP and Baluchistan claimed to be distinct nationalities, so the *muhajirs* claimed to be the fifth nationality.

It was the considered view of the *muhajirs* that since they were in majority in Karachi they could not be forced to live under the Sindhis as a minority in the Sindh province in any future dispensation. Hence, their demand for the creation of a separate province of Karachi. It was because of their exclusiveness that they had earned the wrath of the Sindhis who cynically told the *muhajirs* to construct the *Muhajir Suba* in the Arabian Sea or return to their homes in India. True, some *muhajirs* realized the gravity of the situation and, in view of the hardships experienced by the Biharis stranded in Bangladesh, were trying to modify their stance. They were advising their wards to acquire proficiency in Sindhi language and never utter a word against the land of their adoption. However, the leadership of the *muhajirs* was hell-bent on carving out a province (state) of their own. Under the circumstances it was anybody's guess as to what fate awaited them. The more they tried to distance themselves from the sons of the soil i.e. the Sindhis, the more they got branded as aliens and usurpers who should be driven out of the soil.

Unfortunately, I could not establish contact with the veteran Sindhi leader G.M. Sayyed leading the movement of *Jeeye Sindh* as he had been interned in his village home. However, during 1988, when Sayyad Sahib visited Bombay and Delhi for medical treatment, I had the opportunity to spend many hours with him. In a public function held in New Delhi, he was hailed the leader of the Sindhis and presented with the award of *Sindhu Ratan*.

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The author garlanding Sayyad Sahib at a public function in New Delhi. On the left, holding the mike, is the late Acharya Bhagwan Dev, Congress Member of Parliament who had organised the World Sindhi Conference in Delhi in October 1983. The Conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

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And now about the constitutional validity of the December 1984 referendum, 1985 elections and the assemblies. I quote here the views of an advocate who had been arrested in July 1984 for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow the Zia regime and had been acquitted and released in July 1985. He said that the question about the legal status and validity of referendum, assemblies and elections was not a fair question because it assumed that there was in their society, an operative measure of legality and validity whereas, in fact, the heart of the problem was that they, as a society had, through their own action and positive inaction, lost or destroyed the instrument of power of social effectiveness. When asked to comment on the performance of the Junejo Government from 1985 to 1987 and explain whether the prime minister had been following independent policies or the ones laid down by President Gen. Zia-ul-Haque, his reply was that

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earlier, Mr. Junejo had more of an open mind about the extent of his legal power and real motives. But two years in office had shown him that the whip was still firmly held by the General. And he had accepted that position without a murmur. That might have been a ruse to avoid another complete martial law. But Junejo did not appear to be so clever except that he was a Sindhi, and Zia, a migrant. The eminent lawyer Raza Kasim was convinced that they had been moving on the wrong track and, therefore, to switch over to the right track, they had to reverse the journey.

Industrialist's View

I had the privilege to meet one of the top magnates of the industry. He spoke with candour. On being asked about the future of Pakistan, he replied that unless the present lame democracy developed into a full-fledged liberal democracy in the not so distant future, there was bound to be more resentment and anger against the Establishment. And, in case, another martial law was imposed, there was bound to be revolt in the provinces. People were feeling fed up with the prevailing situation and were waiting for the final assault on the citadel of reaction.

Resentment amongst the professionals

I stayed in Karachi for two days and the last evening was spent at the famous Karachi Press Club. It so happened that the Sindhi Graduates Association (no government employee can become its member) organised their annual function in the vast ground behind the Club. The gathering of about three thousand graduates represented different professions like doctors, lawyers, engineers and architects etc. The best known Sindhi singer Aabida Parveen swayed the audience for long, by rendering songs composed by Sindh's sufi saint Abdul Latif Bhitai. Some papers were also read on the life of the saint. It was a memorable evening. Stalls set up on the lawns were selling the latest books on the Sindhi problem and they were being picked up like hot cakes. Every now and then, someone would shout "*Qaumi Nara*" (National Slogan) and the audience would respond with "Jeeye Sindh" (Long Live Sindh). The programme went on well past mid-night.

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Books Confiscated without authority

On my way back I spent another day in Lahore before crossing the border back to India. On the border, Pakistani customs confiscated a number of books I had purchased in Lahore and Karachi. Some of the books presented to me by the authors were also seized. A twinkle in the eyes of the customs officer made me feel that there was somebody higher up, under whose instructions that was being done.

True, I had lost books but the episode was more embarrassing to my journalist friend who had come to see me off at the border. He tried to intercede quoting the Prime Minister that the rule of law had been restored in Pakistan, but to no avail. The customs officer even laughed and asked "What law are you quoting"?

I told the officers that I had purchased some and had been presented with the rest. No one book had been proscribed by the military regime. The freely available books included one authored by Khan Wali Khan son of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The officer offered to pay the amount I had spent to buy the books. That revealed his hand. I told him that I could not compound the crime. Those books never came back to me.

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November, 1995

THIRD VISIT

My third visit to Lahore, after partition was a very refreshing experience. I had gone there to attend Pakistan-India Convention on Peace and Democracy on 10-11 November 1995 as the representative of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). Delhi had hosted the first such Convention in February 1995.

In December 1980, during my first visit, Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Zia-ul-Haque had already hanged elected Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his engine of repression was running at full speed. American Imperialism was helping in the process, by planning the subversion of the non-aligned state of Afghanistan and back home, in patronising the Mudoudi brand of *mullahs* and the Pagara brand of *pirs* to keep the illiterate masses under the spell of the magic word of Islam.

Having been nominated by the AITUC to proceed to Lahore, I had thought of some tasks ahead, besides attending the Convention. I also thought it a good idea to carry copies of the Platinum Jubilee Year-end Special Number of the Trade Union Record, organ of the AITUC, carrying the life sketches of the organisation's past presidents. Regrettably, however, nothing could be found about one such stalwart, Comrade Fazal Elahi *Qurbaan* of Lahore. So getting hold of some relevant material was top priority. Secondly, although during earlier visits I had met the leaders of the trade union movement of the newspaper industry, I had no plans to meet and interact with the hard core trade unionists operating in different sectors. I also decided to meet legendary trade unionist Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim. So I had to find him out and express my reverence for the one whom I had last heard in the public meetings before partition, where the famous stanza of Hyderabad's revolutionary poet Mohiuddin Makhdoom was sung

Hum aisee azadi kab chahein
Mazdoor ka jis mein raj na ho
How can we long for such independence,
where the workers do not rule the land.

Carrying all these thoughts in the recesses of my mind and hopeful of realizing my cherished dreams, I, as part of

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the Indian delegation landed at Lahore in the evening of 9 November 1995, in less than an hour's flight from Delhi. Mr. I.A. Rehman, a known journalist and Director, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Dr. Mubashir Hasan, former finance minister in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government, another moving spirit behind the well-intentioned efforts of such conventions and many more were there to receive us. That night I spent in a small hotel, in Gulberg, a new housing complex in the suburbs of Lahore.

On 10 November morning, the Convention had its inaugural session; the customary speeches and then formation of groups to discuss special issues and then the tea break. It was at that time that I requested my friend Chaudhary Gulzar Ahmed, General Secretary, Pakistan Trade Union Federation to arrange my dash to Mirza Sahib's abode. Driving towards Shahugarhi area where the veteran lived, I took with me a garland of roses to present to Mirza Sahib.

Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim (1905-1999) a comrade in arms of the Indian trade union leader V.V. Giri, who later on became the President of India, was an outstanding leader of railway workers of the North Western Railway, with Lahore as its headquarters. After the partition, when in January 1948, the Pakistan Trade Union Federation was founded, Mirza Sahib was elected its president. The revolutionary poet Faiz Ahmad *Faiz* and the famous revolutionary Malik Fazal Elahi *Qurbaan* were the vice-presidents of the said federation, affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

With Pakistan joining the American military blocs and Mc Carthyism in action, the Communist Party of Pakistan and the Trade Union Federation were banned. The same fate overtook "*Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-pasand Mussanfeen* (The Progressive Writers Association).

During the entire period of Martial Law, Mirza Ibrahim suffered terribly. He spent long terms in the infamous cells of Lahore Fort, where Jayaprakash Narayan had once been tortured.

Mirza Sahib had no prior information about our surprise visit to him. As we knocked at his door, to our pleasant surprise, Mirza Sahib himself opened the gate and came out, his gait steady. As local comrades introduced me, I garlanded the 90-year old veteran and bowed to touch his feet. He clasped my hands and held me in a tight embrace

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with tears rolling down our cheeks. He conducted us inside the room and having seated us comfortably, enquired about some old friends and comrades-in-arms. Over cups of steaming hot tea, he enquired how P.C. Joshi, G. Adhikari and S.A. Dange passed their last days; whether Sohan Singh Josh and Teja Singh Swatantar had penned down their reminiscences before departing from the world; where was the grave of Sayyad Sajjad Zaheer, the first general secretary of the Pakistan Communist Party who suffered terribly in the Machch jail (in Baluchistan) after his conviction in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, against which the AITUC had protested vehemently at that time. I invited Mirza Sahib to the Convention in progress in Lahore and he agreed. Assuring him that a car would transport him to the Convention venue next morning we took leave of him.

On the morning of 11 November, delegates assembled to continue the deliberations and lo and behold! Mirza Sahib was brought to the venue. Suddenly many a delegate, specially trade unionists, rushed forward to receive him. He was conducted to the trade union group meeting, which was the first of its kind after partition in 1947. He was honoured to preside over the session. On his exhortation the meeting of the trade unionists of India and Pakistan resolved to work with redoubled efforts, for peace among both the countries and for the success of democratic experiment everywhere. Our meeting also decided to enlist the support of as many trade unions as possible working in both countries, for the noble cause of Indo-Pak friendship.

AITUC, on its part, accepted the responsibility of extending its helping hand in the work, so far as India was concerned.

As our group meeting was coming to a close and the Convention resumed its session for presentation of group reports, I was informed of two things: first, a book in Urdu *'Punjab ke Inquilabi Reh-numa**" (Revolutionary leaders of Punjab) carrying the life and contribution of the late Fazal Elahi Qurbaan had been found and second a meeting of the hard core trade unionists had been called next afternoon to exchange experiences. Mirza Sahib had been invited to that function, also.

* This book is authored by Aslam Raheel Mirza, a journalist and a trade unionist of Lahore

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FAZAL ELAHI QURBAAN

Fazal Elahi Qurbaan

Readers may like to know something about Malik Fazal Elahi *Qurbaan* (August 1902 – November 1978). He was born in Mochi Gate area of Lahore. In June 1920, when after the dismemberment of *Khilafat*, the great anti-imperialist Maulana Abdul Bari *firangi mahal* decreed India as a "*daar-ul-harb*", and called upon the Muslims of India to migrate towards Afghanistan to wage an armed struggle against the English, Qurbaan without telling his family, left for the Frontier Province. Helped by the famous revolutionary Maulana Abdul Rahim Popalzai, *Qurbaan* reached Jalalabad in Afghanistan. The governor and war minister General Nadir Khan, (who after disposing of Bacha Sagao, a British puppet who had usurped the throne of Kabul),had proclaimed himself the ruler with the title of Nadir Shah, helped him. *Qurbaan* reached Kabul and crossing *Qurram* range of the Himalayas, arrived at Tashkent. He joined the Military School set up by the revolutionary council, supervised by Indian revolutionaries M.N. Roy and Abani Mukerji.

In 1926, *Qurbaan* reached Moscow and after finishing his course in Sociology, joined the Red Academy for further training. After some time, *Qurbaan* somehow returned to Calcutta and stayed with the Tagore family. While in Calcutta, he came into contact with the labour leader Muzaffar Ahmed, one of the founder members of the Communist Party of India. He shifted to Bombay and dedicated his life to the service of the working class. Returning to Lahore, *Qurbaan* besides working as a journalist in the Urdu daily *Ehsan*, run by his brother, Noor Elahi, threw himself, heart and soul, in the trade union movement.

In January 1945, *Qurban* presided over the XXI Session of the AITUC, held in Madras, now Chennai. S.A. Dange,

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the elected president could not attend the session as he had gone to London to attend a World Trade Union Conference which eventually led to the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

It was in the Madras session of AITUC that V.V. Giri, declared "If India was to attain her full stature in the comity of nations it must be on the basis of united India and not divided India. So far as the workers of this country are concerned, a divided India is a danger".

Where Bhagat Singh was hanged

As I boarded a waiting car, one evening, to see some new colonies and then to reach down town, two Indian ladies, one of them hailing from Tamilnadu, also joined me to be dropped at their hotel, on the way. I chose to make a running commentary for the benefit of the companions on their maiden visit to Lahore. In the dark horizon, I observed a flood-lit fountain playing in a distant crossing. I, as though subconsciously, shouted; "Attention, please! The place where the fountain stands today, is the exact site of the gallows, which Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev had mounted with the slogan '***INQUILAB ZINDABAD***" on their lips. The prison has since been demolished and a fountain built, not to commemorate their martyrdom but to erase the memory of the martyrs of India." The ladies wept bitterly and cried loudly, as the car sped past the hallowed spot.

A fountain in Lahore, not to memorialise but to erase the memory of the martyrs of India from the minds of Pakistanis (Photo sent by a friend)

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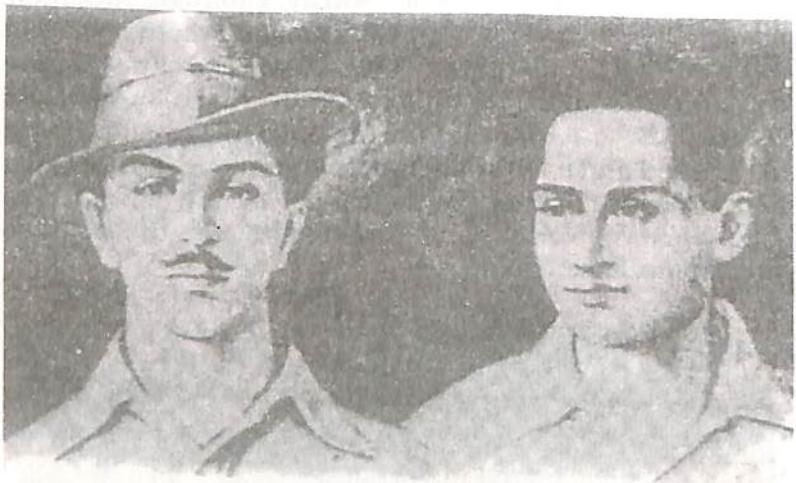
Readers may be interested to know that interest in Shaheed-e-Azam, Bhagat Singh is growing in Pakistan. Some time back, a group of Pakistanis visiting Delhi, specially requested me to arrange real and authentic photographs of Bhagat Singh which I was able to procure from the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Teen Murti. A recent issue of the monthly magazine "*Awami Manshoor*" of Karachi has published the letter jointly addressed to the British Governor of the Punjab by Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on 3 March 1931, from the Lahore Central jail, telling him that since the English judge had sentenced them to death for waging war against the Crown, so they be shot and not just hanged. Alongwith the said letter, the magazine has also published the popular picture of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, the two who had thrown bombs in the Central Assembly, on April 18, 1928.



This popular picture of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt was published in the Pakistani magazine, Awami Manshoor of Karachi

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Hum Honge Kaamyaab Ek Din
(We shall overcome, one day)

In the afternoon of 12 November, a meeting was held in the premises of *Jiddo-juhd*, the Weekly of the Trade Unions. Tariq Farooq, General Secretary of the Labour Party of Pakistan, Sain Akhtar Hussain, popular Punjabi poet, and , many others were there to receive and introduce us to the already assembled workers. The small hall was packed to capacity, the overflow blocked the passages and spilled over to the galleries. Some pictures of the famous trade unionists of yesteryears adored the walls. And it was a pleasant surprise to find the picture of Shankar Neogi, the legendary trade unionist of Chhatisgarh (M.P.), killed by the mafia. Neogi had not only fought against the highhandedness of the management who treated the workers worse than slaves but had also transformed the lives of the workers by organising a network of co-operative societies thus saving them from the clutches of the money lenders. Also, he led a great movement against the drinking habits of the workers, leading to a more harmonious family life in the working class colonies. Shankare Neogi was killed in a cold blooded way. Although the assailants were identified, however, our judicial system pronounced them not guilty and set them free.

In the meeting hall, there was an atmosphere of exuberance and a sense of history. As Mirza Sahib approached the hall, each one of us stood up and surged forward to welcome him. Besides me, the Indian side was represented by Mr. Ashok Rao, general secretary of the Indian Public Sector Officers Association and Swami Agnivesh, who hails from Andhra Pradesh and is leading the movement for the emancipation of the bonded and the child labour. A number of Punjabi poets of Pakistan also graced the occasion. The proceedings were conducted in Punjabi. Only Swamiji spoke in Hindi, remarkably simple Hindi which the Urdu-wallas may call simple Urdu. Even Ashok Rao, a Telegu, spoke in Punjabi which he had picked up from his Punjabi wife.

I, of course, addressed the gathering in the colloquial of Lahore.

Poet Sain Akhtar Hussain 'Akhtar' recited his famous poem in Punjabi.

'Allah mian tu thalley aa, apni duniya venda ja'
Oh my God, please come down and
See the condition of your own creation

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Then Arif *Prohna* sang

"Oder khatri, eder khojey, apne apne bharde bojey
Ghareeb vichare te jamme ney, rakhan lae bhuk de rozey
Khatris (traders) on that side and khojas (traders) on this side are filling their pockets,
Workers alone are observing fast of hunger

The recitations charged the atmosphere with emotions and the full throated slogans of ***'INQUILAB ZINDABAD*** the slogan first raised by Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt while throwing the bombs in the Central Assembly and ***"DUNIYA BHAR KE MAZDOORO EK HO JAO"*** *(Workers of the world! Unite)* rent the air.

Then Mirza Sahib addressed the meeting. He unburdened his heart and outpoured his innermost feelings. He came down heavily on American Imperialism, which he said, in order to sell arms and corner world wealth, had been inciting nations and igniting armed conflicts among them. He told the gathering that it was up to the working class of India and Pakistan to accept the challenge and perform and carry out the historic task of transforming society into one where reason reigns and human progress becomes the measure of all progress. In a reference to the break up of the Soviet Union, Mirza Sahib said, "Dismemberment of the Soviet Union, in no case, signals the demise of Marxism-Leninism. Ideas are universal, states are national or at best multinational. The death of a state belonging to a particular ideology cannot mean the death of the ideology."

Raising his voice, Mirza Sahib pressed the trade unionists of both the countries to forge new bonds of comradeship and work out a common strategy to meet the common challenges thrown by the multi-nationals. To defeat the game of the MNC's operating in all the countries of the sub-continent, coming together of the TU's operating in these countries is the first condition, he asserted.

The other Pakistani leaders who spoke on the occasion included Chaudhary Gulzar Ahmed, general secretary of the All Pakistan Trade Unions Federation – affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), Bashir Zafar, President, Bhatta Mazdoor Federation of Pakistan, Tariq Farooq, General Secretary, Inquilabi Jado-Jehad Centre, Lahore and Yusuf Baloach.

Representatives of about 60 trade unions operating in the Railways, Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA), and private and public sectors had attended the meeting.

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The meeting ended with all of us holding each other's hands and singing '***HAM HONGE KAAMYAAB EK DIN***" (We shall overcome, one day).

Sitting second from the left is 94 years old Mirza Ibrahim, in conversation with comrades, just two months before his death, on 13th August, 1999.

(Photo sent by a friend)

Before taking leave of the local comrades, I enquired if any collection of *Ustaad Daaman's* poems had been published, even after his death. I offered to purchase a copy of the same, if available. Sain 'Akhtar' nodded affirmatively and gave me the address of the publishing house where "*Daaman De Moti*" was on sale. Just as I was leaving, Tariq Furooq came forward and presented me a set of books and booklets.

Islamic Meet Calls for *Jehad*

I learnt from the reports appearing in Lahore press that during our Convention of secular minded people hailing from both sides of the border, another congregation of Islamic militants was in progress, in the Iqbal Park (formerly Minto Park) where in 1940 the Muslim League had adopted the Resolution, demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims of India and where now stands *the Meenar-e-Pakistan.*

Held under the auspices of the fundamentalist Jamait-e-Islami, the conference was attended by militants hailing from at least eighteen countries, including some Arab and African countries. A large number of students from the Saudi funded

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and Wahabi Mudoudi moulded, Islamic University of Islamabad, a hub of terrorist activities, also attended. Thousands had gathered to listen to the rhetoric of the present day crusaders in the cause of Islam. The speech of Kashmir Jamait-e-Islami separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, was also broadcast through tele-network. He was addressing the conference from Srinagar, capital of Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir.

This Islamic meet called for the overthrow / elimination of renegade rulers of the Muslim countries like Algeria, Egypt and Turkey. *Jehad* was the only logical course to be adopted by the *Umma*, the fiery speakers yelled before the frenzied crowd.

The Islamic meet also served an ultimatum on Ms. Benazir Government* to fall in line with the thinking of the militant *ulema* by 23 March 1996, or face the wrath of the soldiers of the Faith.

November 13 was my last day in Lahore, but before saying good bye to the ancient city, I snatched some moments to visit the spacious bookshop of Ferozesons on the *Shahrah-e-Quaid-i-Azam* (formerly The Mall) and purchased a copy of "*Daaman De Moti*", compiled by Sain Akhtar Hussain *Akhtar* and published by the Daaman Academy. As it happened, *Daaman*, all through his life had never allowed anybody to record any poem that he recited anywhere. It was only after his death that his large number of admirers pooled all and penned down the poems, they remembered by heart and had them published in a book form. According to Faiz Ahmed *Faiz*, *Daman* ranks among the greatest Punjabi poets like Waris Shah of Heer Ranjha fame and Hashim, the Sufi saint of Akbar's times I also purchased the Verses of the Sufi Saint, Baba Farid, in Punjabi, in the Persian script. Many of his verses are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. Baba Farid (1173-1265) died in Pakpattan, Distt. Sahiwal (earlier known as Montgomery). It may also be of interest to the readers to know that the famous Moroccan traveller, Ibn Batuta, visited Pakpattan in 1334 and the conquerer Amir Timur in 1398, to pay homage to the memory of the Sufi saint.

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* Benazir was dismissed on 5 November 1996

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February-March, 1999

FOURTH VISIT

A visit to Pakistan has always been a thrilling experience for me. Towards the end of February and early March of 1999, I was to be there within days of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's bus drive to Lahore, my birthplace.

I had been invited to a Peace Conference called at Karachi on 27-28 February, 1999. The Conference had been sponsored by Pakistan Peace Coalition, an organisation determined to end nuclear weapons in all forms and in all countries and reject weapons of mass destruction and nuclear deterrence as legitimate ways of achieving national security. Another objective of the Peace Coalition was to counter the increasing trend of intolerance and violence in Pakistani society. The local host in Karachi was the Action Committee Against Arms Race (ACAAR).

Among the more than two dozen Indian invitees, were two members of Parliament.

As we landed at Karachi, on the evening of 26 February, Mr. Karamat Ali, the efficient director of PILER, was there to welcome us. We were lodged at the Hotel Metropole, which was also the venue of the Conference. I spent two days in Karachi and the following four days in Lahore.

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session on the morning of 27 February was attended by over 300 people, including special invitees from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and some European countries. Some distinguished members of the Sindh Assembly were also attending.

Pakistan Peace Coalition convener, B.M. Kutty, welcoming the delegates and others, felt happy at the huge gathering and said that we could take it as a healthy indication of the future struggle for peace being waged jointly by those inside the Parliament and outside.

Mr. Kutty told the gathering that the nuclear tests conducted by India and later by Pakistan in May of the previous year, 1998 had sent shock waves across the sub-continent threatening to excerbate regional tensions and disturb global peace. Misled by decades of propaganda about the nuclear weapons elevating the status of nations, many

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sections of society in both countries were tempted to greet the nuclear test with genuine, even if short-lived euphoria.

Soon however, these groups realized the need of launching a collective struggle to mobilise public opinion against nuclear weapons in South Asia. This is how the Pakistan Peace Coalition came into being.

The Coalition convener also made it clear that the Conference was not expected to announce some kind of a charter of demands but would spell out what the society wants and would give a direction to the struggle to achieve the same.

Mr. I.A. Rehman, Director of the Human Rights Commission, Pakistan, and the moving spirit behind the Conference, in his key note address, reminded the audience that "Under the cover of national security, the State of Pakistan – and perhaps one could say this about other states across the whole of South Asia too – had relegated the citizen to the status of subject. We were persuaded to go hungry, to accept sickness as an unavoidable affliction and to remain unlettered because whatever resources we had were needed to buy weapons that were supposed to be essential for national security..... And we were told to thank God for our rulers, however, ignorant and wicked and rapacious they were, because that was the demand of the patriotic duty. Equipped with the borrowed rhetoric of globalization, our rulers appear determined to shed their benevolent functions and rely more and more on their coercive power. Their mindless worship of the new tin-gods betrays not only their lack of comprehension but also a stunning contempt for the people."

Looking at Pakistan's history, Rehman reminded the audience "our frequent use of violence against political dissidents has thoroughly brutalized the society..... The theory of terror offers little room for the civil society to play its due role. This is what we are witnessing in Pakistan".

Then asking how are we going to go about the task in hand, Rehman reminded the gathering of "one of the fundamental lessons of history learnt after centuries of trials and tribulations, that peace, democracy and human rights were indivisible and independent. It was only under the banner of peace, democracy and human rights that we must begin to restructure our states, to revive our egalitarian ideals

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and to re-establish the authority of civil society versus the State".

Member of Indian Parliament, Nirmala Deshpande, Chairperson, Association of Peoples of Asia, addressing the gathering said that the root cause of war could be found both in the social structure as well as in the minds of men and women. It was, therefore, necessary to adopt a strategy to bring about a change in the minds of men and women.

She added that a non-violent polity, non-violent economy, non-violent social order and a culture of non-violence alone can ensure lasting peace.

Nirmala Deshpande reminded the audience that religious bigotry i.e. fundamentalism, is also a cause for tensions. Inter-faith dialogues help in building bridges of understanding between different communities.

Deshpande exhorted the writers, journalists, artists, social activists, women and youth activists, trade union workers, farmers and artisans belonging to different countries in South Asia to come together to think, plan and work together. Peace marches of joint groups from one country to another would be very effective. People are the best guarantee for peace. Common man is still sound and peace loving. All that is needed is to mobilise the people for action to build a peaceful society, she concluded.

After the inaugural function, the Conference was divided into groups that dealt with the following subjects

1. Security and disarmament
2. Economics of war and peace
3. Peace politics in the mass media.
4. Art, culture and peace.
5. Gender and militarisation
6. Advocacy for peace
7. Peace education
8. Regional conflicts – including Kashmir
9. Peace policies in the labour movement.

The discussion in all group meetings was, according to reports reaching me, lively and groups reached complete understanding on all matters.

Group 9 was headed by me.

The second and the final day of the conference witnessed presentation of reports by the group leaders. Every report was adopted with applause and finally, the Karachi

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Declaration was adopted with everyone standing. The Declaration demanded that India and Pakistan must sign a No-War Pact. Further, the Declaration rejected Nuclear Nationalism.

The State of the Pakistani Trade Union

When I landed at the Lahore Airport on the morning of 1st March 1999, by the first flight from Karachi, Zafar Aiwan was there to receive me. We had met earlier at Delhi. He drove me to his modest house, located in the working class area of Shahugarhi. It was in this area that the modern industrial working class was born in Lahore, in 1874 when a loco workshop was established to attend to the needs of the expanding railway system of the North Western Railways. The legendary leader of the railway workers Mirza Ibrahim had been living in the colony for decades. He was out of town and I missed an opportunity to meet him once again. Soon, some friends were informed about my visit and I was transported to a hotel situated at the crossing of Mcleod Road, Abbot Road and Nisbet Road, outside the Walled City.

My mind was still wondering. I had no agenda. Sheer chance had taken me to Karachi and pure sentiments had brought me to the city of my birth. Some responsible comrades had taken charge of me but I was free to meet anybody. Beyond the trade union fold, there were some whose books I had read during the last few months and I had a natural desire to meet them. One of them had written a 700 page book on a sensitive subject like the partition of India and involving personalities of Maulana Azad and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. But first things first; let us talk of the state of the Trade Union in Pakistan.

Now, it is common knowledge that Pakistan suffered long spells of Martial Law including the Islamic Martial Law of Zia. As a result, all social institutions including the trade union suffered terribly.

Fortunately, after long years of ruthless rule, civil authority was restored. However, as the new economic policy including privatisation proceeded along the IMF / WB charted course, the working people and other exploited classes and their organisations started feeling the pinch. And, as the individual unions and the federations found it next to impossible to fight the menace single-handedly, they thought

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it prudent to come closer. The objective conditions and the shared experiences and understanding of the leaders led to the formation of the Pakistan Workers Confederation in 1994. It included federations affiliated to both the WFTU and the ICFTU. It also included unions loyal to the Fourth International.

The objectives of the Apex body include the successful culmination of the struggle against privatisation – and the abolition of landlordism and distribution of state lands amongst the landless. Another aim of the Confederation is to unite the democratic organisations of all the working people with those of intellectuals, journalists and professional experts etc. so as to usher in an era of economic and social equality.

I had a fairly long conversation with some of the leaders. I was informed that things were not normal. The academic community had, by law, been kept out of the national discourse. The media, outside the official control, was being bullied into surrender. And trade unions had been divested of their functions in a sector where they had existed even before independence. For instance, in the Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the banks, the trade union rights granted under the colonial period, had been curbed/snatched.

In the Government and semi-Government establishments, the policy of privatisation and downsizing was being forced down at the behest of IMF and the WB. As a result, more than six thousand industrial units were lying closed. The rulers were raising the slogan, "Pay off your dues and save the country". But how many defaulters had actually cleared their liabilities, perhaps, not even a fraction.

Comrades further informed me that 1.30 lakh strong labour force of WAPDA had been denied the right to union formation. The workers could now be sacked without serving any show-cause notice. Also, the bank employees had been denied basic trade union rights. No dismissed or discharged employee could continue union membership.

All these restrictions and curbs were in violation of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 which had been ratified by the Pak Govt. Some unions had filed writ petitions against such restrictions. The Confederation made complaints to the ILO.

The ILO in its Interim Report on the subject matter of complaint, deplored that the government had violated its

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obligations arising from Conventions No.87 and 98. The ILO also deplored the promulgation of Presidential Ordinance which suspended the trade union rights of the WAPDA workers and prevented the union from carrying out its normal trade union activities*.

The industries and departments where the workers had been deprived of the right to collective bargaining include:

1. Pakistan International Airlines
2. Pakistan Telecommunications
3. Pakistan Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA)
4. Ghazipur Brotha Project
5. Pakistan Railway
6. Oil and Gas Corporation
7. Karachi Port Trust
8. Karachi Municipal Corporation

Comrades also informed me that as a result of large scale unemployment, there had been a number of cases of suicides.

According to a study, the return flow in overseas migration was being witnessed over the last many years.

Friends said that the government of Pakistan, in order to camouflage its anti-working class policies, called a conference to discuss its proposed labour policy. The Confederation, however, declined the invitation and boycotted the conference for the simple reason that the curbs being imposed, even on the laws enacted during colonial days, utterly exposed the hollowness of the tall claims mentioned in the proposed labour policy. According to them, the Pak govt. had, with a view to make payment of interest on loans under the recent agreement with IMF, decided not only to speed up the privatisation of railways, WAPDA, gas and the banks, but also to raise the tariffs of power and gas, thus further weakening the economic conditions of the common people.

Comrades further informed me that under agreements with the World Bank, one lakh sixteen thousand employees were being sought to be retrenched in the state and the semi-state sector establishment.

Not that the unions had been taking all this lying down. They had closed their ranks and were fighting back at every step, courageously.

* [ILO Official Bulletin Vol. LXXX II, 1999.]

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On 13 April 1998, Demands Day was observed all over by organising rallies and processions.

May Day has always been celebrated unitedly and with fervour.

Against restrictions imposed on the bankmen's unions widespread protest meetings were organised.

On 5 May 1998, 'Pen Down' strike was observed in the whole country.

On 25 June 1998, Black Day was observed by raising black flags in the factories and establishments.

In many places, wherever referendum was held to determine the representative character of the unions, the affiliates of the Confederation had come out of the test with flying colours.

Friends informed me that the $40 billion worth of external loans had tied the national economy to the IMF/WB chariot of economic slavery. Worse still, 50% of the national income was being spent on payment of interest on loans. This plus the expenditure on defence had rendered social programmes, if any, starving for funds.

The confederation, comprising elements belonging to different political hues, as well as independent ones, had generated some confidence among the workers. New teams of the young trade unionists were being formed to take care of the expanding and much demanding work at the grass roots level.

The Confederation at its third Delegate Conference held on 25 February, 1999, at Lahore, demanded that to ward off the danger of economic bankruptcy, the Prime Minister of Pakistan must, in order to make the country self-reliant and free of dependance on foreign aid, carry out long term revolutionary economic and social reforms. Landlordism must be ended and the state sector bank loans to the influential persons must be recovered. Class system based upon capital must be replaced with a system based upon equality, labour efficiency and integrity and respect for higher values.

To carry the message of unity and struggle to all levels, the Confederation called upon the industrial working class and the peasantry to organise themselves at the plant, town and divisional levels and also to arrange and organise ideological and trade union education to prepare the workers to join hands

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with other patriotic classes, journalists, lawyers, economic experts and social scientists to launch a struggle against landlordism and capitalism as well as against the exploitative system.

Among the trade unionists I had the chance to meet on different dates, there were some who talked about Vajpayee's bus ride to Lahore just a week earlier. One of them told me that although some elements of the trade union movement were not particularly keen to accord a special welcome to the Indian leader, they, nonetheless, were one with the entire forward looking citizens of Lahore, not to hold any protest demonstration against the Prime Minister of India. Of course, a lunatic fringe would always be there. He further clarified that the trade union workers not keen to accord special welcome were solely prompted by their analysis that the Vajpayee establishment was anti-worker and therefore he deserved no special welcome. But how many joined the Jammat Islami organised violent demonstration? I asked. He calculated a bit and replied: Not more than 125. And how many were Lahoris, I further asked. He calculated again and replied that not more 25 belonged to Lahore. Seeing utter absence of response to their exhortation, Jammat leaders, frantically contacted some hard core *maulvis* and thus succeeded in collecting a small but determined group to carryout the command of obscurantism.

The Indian Prime Minister's visit to Lahore in February, 1999, seemed to have turned a full circle since prime minister Nehru's last flying visit to that ancient city, to which his mother belonged, in November 1947, to agree to official exchange of population residing, for centuries, on both sides of the line drawn by an English Arbitrator, Lord Radcliffe. Since then no Prime Minister of India had ever visited Lahore, the heart of Pakistan.

The people were continuously fed with anti-Indian and anti-Hindu propaganda, prompted by the imperialist design to keep, after painful birth, both the new states at loggerheads, on real or imaginary issues and thus force them to spend scarcely available national resources on purchasing arms from the same imperialists, for mutual destruction.

New Realisation

The people of Lahore had now, it seemed, come to realize that seeking equation with India, except, perhaps, in

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corruption, was sheer nonsense. India is a big country and Pakistan, less in population than UP is at best, a part of India, wrested to experiment with Islamic values. According to my friend, this experiment had utterly failed. Where is Islam? he asked. And it could never be in the original Arab sense. The citizens of Lahore have nothing in common with the citizens of Tehran, Baghdad or Cairo, except the religion. And they had hundred and one things in common with the people of Amritsar, Delhi and beyond.

Reading the minds of men

During another meeting with friends in Lahore, not all belonging to the trade union, the requirement of visa for travel between India and Pakistan came up for rapid review. Some appreciated the efforts of both governments, to lessen the hazards of travel by train by introducing comparatively comfortable regular bus service between Delhi and Lahore. Some threw more suggestions including the one to restore rail traffic through Rajasthan and Sindh. All that may bring some more relief. But, the Lahoris have a unique problem. They say that the present Indo-Pak traffic, by and large, benefits only the divided Muslim families of undivided India. In Punjab, there was official exchange of population between Muslims on one hand and the Hindus and Sikhs on the other, across the Radcliffe line. Hence, hardly any Muslim of Lahore has any blood relation across the border. So a visit to India to meet relations is ruled out. "Again, let us remember", the friend continued, "that the new generation unlike the fast vanishing one, has no friends either, across the border who may be asked to invite you on some genuine or arranged occasion."

"Then what is your suggestion?" I asked him, to cut the story short. Instantly, the friend suggested that the category of Tourist be added to the categories listed in the visa form."

"As simple as that," I said, "let us try for that." However, a friend sitting in a corner and enjoying some cold drink did not like to stop at that. Thumping the table, and in a firm tone he suggested that the visa regime must go lock, stock and barrel. Some expressed surprise over such a bold statement. Some, however, appreciated the idea, a similar idea being recently translated into the creation of the

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European Union. "That is exactly what I had in mind" exclaimed the bold friend and continued, "If the European nations can unite to face threats from across the Atlantic, can't we come closer in the face of threats from both, the European Community as well as the USA."

Some, however, indicated that without the solution of the Kashmir problem, free flow of human traffic across the sub-continent is just impossible. "Then how can that resolution become possible?" Some one asked. Quick came the reply. "The only solution of the Kashmir problem is the creation of a Socialist Confederation of India, Pakistan and Kashmir." What about Bangladesh?, someone asked and got the answer, "Yes, yes, Bangladesh, too, in the confederation." It was already late evening and we called it a day.

Thus Spake the Elderly Lady

I met an elderly lady of one of the highly respected houses of the ancient town. She is well informed.

The wide ranging conversation warmed up on the atomic explosions conducted on both sides of the divide. "And is there even a remote possibility of the weapon being used?" politely I enquired.

"Yes, there is the possibility," she regretfully confessed.

"But how do you come to such an alarming conclusion"? I wanted her to say something more.

She thought for a while and thus spoke! "Let us remember that notwithstanding the loss of East Pakistan, in the eyes of the Establishment, inclusion of Kashmir remains the unfinished agenda of Pakistan. So long as that objective remains embedded in the recesses of the minds of the rulers of the state, the possibility of armed conflict cannot be ruled out, altogether. That threat shall always overshadow any mutual dialogue."

I ventured to ask whether the Pak Establishment was unware that if it risked another war, it would risk its very existence, as well.

"Yes, that's also true," she agreed but added, "About politics in this country, the less we talk, the better. Any thing can happen. For a moment's *wah ! wa*, they may go to any length."

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"And once the situation gets out of hand and the defeat stares at them, the instincts of revenge and retaliation replace the cultivated, cool command of the mind. In such a frightening situation some mad general here may signal the dropping of the bomb over Delhi. That is not beyond comprehension. Didn't you witness the role of the Islamised generals who refused to salute the *kafir* in Vajpayee," the old lady continued.* The only silver lining in the dark horizon, according to her, is the expanding influence of the *Taliban*. That has really frightened the educated and the enlightened, representing the modern society of Lahore. Alongwith the upper and middle classes, the organised working people also dislike fundamentalism that is being practised in Afghanistan and sought to be enforced in the Kashmir of their concept and is design. Lahoris feel scared at the sweep of the *Lashkar-e-Islam* of the present times, that is hellbent on destroying modern society, including the modern muslim societies.

Both of us remembered the good old days. She remembered old friends like Perin Chandra. She was quite abreast with the progress of the women's movement in India and appreciated the struggle being waged for the reservation of women in the legislatures. In Pakistan things were pretty different, very difficult, indeed, she lamented. In tribal society like Afghanistan's and a feudal one as in Pakistan, the modern concept of equality between the sexes was just inconceivable. However, Lahore was neither tribal nor feudal. It would never permit *the Mullahs* to take over. "And remember", she concluded, "the more the spectre of Islamic fundamentalism of Afghan type and style haunts the citizens of Lahore, the more they will look towards Amritsar and Delhi in search of a common identity."

Walled City Neglected

I found time to wander in the old lanes and bylanes of Lahore.

I found the conditions deteriorating. The walled town was always a vast labyrinth, specially designed to resist the freebooters at every corner of each lane and bylane. If a citizen of, say, Bangalore is taken to one such lane, take it

* Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was overthrown and arrested by the Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf on 12 October, 1999

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from me, the poor one would collapse after a futile search for a way out.

The companions told me that one UN agency wanted Lahore to be declared a 'World Heritage' City. The concerned agency was prepared to spend billions to preserve the city founded by *Lava*, the son of *Rama*. However, it was painful to know that the authorities were not interested in the idea. Perhaps, a large number of the rich and the educated families have moved out into the new colonies and the poor and the semi-literate still living in the lanes are hardly aware of the move, at the world level, to transform their city into a some what better place to live in.

Who's Who of new rulers

I spent some moments in the Lahore museum. The murals on some ceilings, done by Sadqain, my late friend, are really a feast for the eyes.

However, the gallery displaying the portraits of many of the political leadership who had received God and British gifted state, looks like a who's who of Muslim knights and the nawaabs of the British Indian Empire. No wonder, the state was lost to the British trained Muslim army officers, used to saluting the Union Jack, and singing "God save the king," just ten years after the *Quaid-i-Azam* drove through Karachi to preside over the destiny of the new state.

Lahore Press, old files missing

A visit to the adjacent Punjab Library made me sad. Inaugurated in December 1885, and supposed to preserve the files of the Lahore press, it was bereft of all newspapers published before independence. I enquired from the librarian about that loss. He shrugged his shoulders in ignorance. Later on I was told by some friends that the old files of the newspapers had been deliberately destroyed or removed to some unknown place so that the new generation can not know the glorious part played by the Lahore Press in the Indian independence movement.

The state of the Press in Pakistan

During my stay in Pakistan (26-28, February, 1999, in Karachi and the next four days in Lahore) a confrontation was developing between the "Jang Group of Publications"and the Nawaz Sharif government. The publications had carried

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certain stories about the alleged financial deals of the Sharif family. The Govt. of the day, acting on behalf of the allegedly corrupt ruling family, withheld advertisements and the newsprint quota to teach the *Jang* establishment a lesson for revealing the concealed facts about Sharif, which in Arabic means the honourable one.

True to their salt, the journalists in Pakistan considered the action of the government as an attack on the freedom of the press and mounted a campaign to right the wrong.

It may be recalled that the Urdu daily *'Jang'* was first started in Delhi after the outbreak of the Second World War. Next in importance to the English daily 'Dawn' founded by Jinnah, the *'Jang'* was considered the spokesman of the Muslim League in Delhi.

After partition the *'Jang'* moved to Karachi. It engaged the best staff including Shaukat Thanavi and Raees Amrohvi. Its expansion under the command of its founder and Chief-Editor Khalil ur Rehman was phenomenal. For more than three decades now, it has been bringing out a daily edition from London, as well. Its weekly "*Akhbar-e-Jehan*" has no equal in the whole Urdu reading world. Its founder Khalil-ur-Rehman had mastered all the tricks of the trade, including the one to be on the right side of the establishment without revealing it. Essentially, it represented the interests of the Muslims who had migrated from Delhi and UP. Let us remember that the *muhajirs* remained in power till the Punjabi dominated army, helped by Punjabi bureaucracy, ended their rule, once the faderal capital was shifted to Islamabad, the new city founded near Rawalpindi.

The intolerance displayed by the Sharif Government in relation to the *'Jang'* was the talk of the town while I was in Lahore (The Najm Sethi episode had not yet erupted). But in my assessment there was nothing new in it.

Intolerance is inbuilt in any state organised on the basis of a religion. Pakistan was conceived and created in the name of religion on the assumption or conviction that human beings though living together and sharing joys and sorrows for generations yet, if they perform different religious rites and observe separate rules, they can not constitute a nation. And ironically the first victim of this illogical theory was Jiannah himself. It so happened that Jinnah armed with his all

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conquering two nation ideology, left Delhi for Karachi on August 7, 1947, to take over the reins of the new state of Pakistan. On August 11, he was elected president of the Constituent Assembly. By that time much blood had already flowed down the valley of five rivers. Nobody has recorded as to how Jinnah's mind was working during those fateful days but somehow, it seems probable that he saw new light. While addressing the Constituent Assembly on 11 August after his election as president, he declared "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and you will find that in course of time, Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State." It was a long speech. May be the censor, a legacy of the departing British authority could not digest the change in the *Quaid-i-Azam's* mind. He disallowed that particular portion of the speech which advocated, rather mandated a secular approach in matters of state, as it went against the whole logic of the two nation theory. The British censor perhaps forgot that it was the *Quaid's* speech that he sought to tamper with. All hell broke loose. *'Dawn's'* powerful second-in-command Altaf Hussain insisted on the publication of the uncensored full text of the speech.

It may be interesting to recall that *Dawn's* editor Pothen Joseph had accepted the *Quaid-i-Azam's* offer to move to Karachi from Delhi where the *Dawn* was to resume publication. However, Pothen Joseph found the environment in Karachi insecure and soon returned to Bangalore and regularly contributed his old popular column "Over a cup of tea," in the *Deccan Herald.*

However, after the death of Jinnah, the editors of the new country could not uphold the freedom of the press after the signing of the ceasefire agreement on Kashmir. It so happened that in April 1949, the *Civil & Military Gazette*, of Lahore published a report from its New Delhi correspondent A.N. Kumar stating that a compromise formula on the basis

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of partitioning the state of Jammu and Kashmir was under discussion between India and Pakistan and an agreement might be reached soon. (In Lahore, the *Civil & Military Gazette** was what the *Times of India* was in Bombay, *Statesman* in Calcutta and Delhi, *Mail* in Madras and the *Daily Gazette* in Karachi, all representing British imperialist interests.) I am mentioning this particular incident because Kumar was the correspondent of the Urdu daily *Pratap* as well, which also carried the same report. I had joined this premier Urdu daily in Lahore and rejoined it when it resumed publication in Delhi, after partition. Although the Pakistan Government denied the report and this denial was published alongwith an apology of the newspaper management, a campaign against the *C & MG* was launched in Pakistan. In an unprecedented move, 16 dailies of West Pakistan, including the *Pakistan Times* edited by Faiz Ahmed *Faiz*, in a common editorial captioned "Treason", demanded the head of *C&MG*. It is worthwhile to recall that Mian Iftikhar-ud-din, the proprietor of the *Pakistan Times* reprimended *Faiz* on his return from a foreign tour, for the act of surrender to petty minded editors. It is pertinent to note that the East Pakistan editors had refused to join this dirty unprofessional activity against the freedom of the press. The West Pakistan editors had met in the office of the Pakistan Times, Lahore (This building originally belonged to the English daily, *Tribune*, the oldest English daily of Lahore which moved to Simla after partition and, is now published from Chandigarh). The demand of the 'great' editors was given top priority by the Pakistan Govt. and the paper was ordered to be closed for six months. Although sold to a Pakistani Muslim, it never recovered, thereafter.

That was the original sin committed by the high professionals in Pakistan against the principle of the freedom of the press. Perhaps, they had never suffered for the freedom of the press. The grand old journalist-proprietors of Lahore – Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of the daily "*Zamindar*" and Mahashaye Krishna of the daily "*Pratap*", had all their life, suffered but never even remotely supported any action against any paper. They

* Some time before the creation of Pakistan Civil and Military Gazette was purchased by Indian Industrialist Ram Krishan Dalmia, who, however, sold it to a Pakistani Muslim soon after partition.

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believed in the great saying: "*I may not agree with what you say but shall lay down my life to defend your right to say.*"

I must also admit that Jinnah, despite his deep desire to etch out a name in the minds of the Muslim world by founding a new state by any means available, remained a great champion of the freedom of expression, including the Press.

During the Karachi riots in January 1948, the editor of the Sind Observer, K. Punniah wrote some editorials accusing authorities of taking sides with the Muslims. There was sharp reaction among the Govt. and the Muslims over the views aired. They wanted action against the editor. Ultimately the matter was brought to the notice of Jinnah. His firm reply was "No action against the paper". His further advice was "Let other papers give a befitting reply to the editor". For the information of the readers I may add that K. Punniah was the elder brother of K. Rama Rao, first editor of the National Herald, founded by Nehru.

After the death of Jinnah the most deplorable aspect of the situation was that the powerful coterie of the editors helped the establishment in translating its policy of contempt for free expression into action. In 1950, the editor of the Dawn, Altaf Hussain flew to Canada and told the Commonwealth Press Union that the Press in Pakistan had no use of the principle of the freedom of the press. All that happened while there was semblance of democracy. Once the two man rule of Iskandar Mirza and Ayub Khan usurped power and the petition filed by Speaker Tamizuddin for the restoration of the Constituent Assembly was rejected by the federal court and the usurpation of power legitimised by invoking the Doctrine of Necessity, all pretensions/notions about freedom of the press became irrelevant, a thing of the past. Shamefully, the entire press in Pakistan hailed the new despotic order.

I narrate a personal experience to show how irresponsible the press had become during Zia's regime,

After 33 years of the partition, I visited Lahore, my birth place, for the first time on 15 December 1980. At that time I was the Secretary General of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists and news editor of the Urdu daily *Pratap*, Delhi.

I reached the office of the Urdu daily '*Mashriq*', run under Govt. control and published from four centres. I entered the room of the Editor-in-Charge, Zia Ansari. He welcomed me. I

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observed that the first dak edition was being sent to the press. Throwing a glance at the first page, I felt aghast over a report that the grave of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in Delhi, had been demolished and the land allotted to some Hindu milkmen. I just could not believe my eyes over such an irresponsible report. It was a white lie, a canard. I asked Ansari: "What's all this?" He kept mum for a while and then raised his hand skyward, indicating that the report had been sent by the higher-ups in the Govt. Such was the state of affairs of the press and the impotence of the editors.

I would be the last person to say that journalists in general were responsible for this state of affairs. The fraternity under the inspiring leadership of brave journalists Nisar Usmani, Minhaj Barna and Abdul Hameed Chhapra fought against all repressive measures of the Establishment, whether civil or military and suffered again and again. Usmani had the courage to tell Zia in one press conference that he had met all the past presidents of the State and he would not like to think that he was addressing the last president of Pakistan.

During my stay in Lahore in December'80, I had met Usmani and heard a lot about the sad circumstances visiting the profession. His biggest complaint against the Pakistani regime was that its actions had rendered the whole institution of the Press unreliable. Also the people had stopped listening to Pak Radio, as well. Journalists had been flogged and detained and while receiving medical treatment in hospitals, were chained to the cots.

Paying obeisance to the almighty Uncle Sam, offering prayers five times a day and flogging the dissidents in public became the most vital function of the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Verily, the press was in chains. There was only one place in the whole country where the writ of the military dictators did not run. That was the Karachi Press club, also housing the office of the journalist union, the only island of defiance amidst the ruins of slavish behaviour. In the whole country only one weekly newspaper that had refused to fall in line, survived. That was Mr. Mazhar Ali Khan's "Viewpoint" ably assisted by I.A. Rehman. Rehman sincerely believed that the *Quaid* meant to set up a secular state. However, he had not witnessed the huge processions taken out daily in Lahore in the immediate pre-partition days, raising not only the slogan *Dil Ki Tamanna Pakistan* (our

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heart's desire – Pakistan) – *Leke Rahenge Pakistan* (We shall win Pakistan) but also qualifying it with the mandate: *Pakistan Ka Matlab Kya* (What is the meaning of Pakistan) – *La Il La Il Il La.*

It was during the period of Islamisation under Zia that the great Punjabi Poet, Ustaad Daaman summed up the sad situation in his famous stanza in Punjabi language:

Is mulk de do khuda
(There are two gods of this country)
La Ila te martial law
(La Ila and Martial Law)

My second visit to Lahore and Karachi during October 1987 witnessed some relaxation in the control of the press. Junejo was the prime minister and Benazir was on the march. My friend and the revolutionary poet Habib Jaleb's following stanza rent the air from Sialkot to Sindh:

Ladte hein bandookon wale, ik nihatti ladki se
(These men with the guns are fighting against an unarmed girl).

My third visit to Lahore in November 1995, witnessed heartening and encouraging environment. My fourth visit to Lahore in 1999 found concern over the extra-legal methods being adopted by the Establishment to discipline the press.

Many trade unionists wanted to hear me on the subject of the freedom of the press in India. The newly formed Labour Party organised a public meeting on 3 March and invited me to address the same. I accepted the invitation.

Besides the new journals seeing the light of the day, I was deeply impressed by the new books being published by the new publishing houses. A number of books were about India.

New trends in Pakistani political publications

Lahore is a big publishing centre in the world of Urdu language. This despite the fact that hardly 5% of this city's present population of five million plus speak Urdu as their mother tongue. However, Urdu dominates the horizon of the world in print. Punjabi remains the spoken language of the patricians and the plebeians, alike. However, it has yet to acquire even a toehold in education and administration.

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It so happened that towards the end of 1998 and in the beginning of the 1999, some books and booklets, in Urdu, published from Lahore and some other centres in Pakistan, came into my hands. They were either presented to me in Delhi, towards the end of 1998 or at Lahore during my visit to that city in the first week of March, 1999. The most important book, according to me, is "*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad aur qaumprast musalmano ki siyasat*" (The politics of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other nationalist Muslims). The author Mr. Mohammed Farooq Qureshi dedicated the book "to the bards of the freedom movement who insisted on calling a spade a spade."

The book opens with the following saying of Maulana Azad:

"The world may doubt our intentions but we never harboured any doubts about our decisions. Any confusion about time, any ebb and flow of the fortunes of the situation and any irritating problems have never changed our course."

The preface details the reasons for the preparation and the publication of the book.

"During the movement for and after the establishment of Pakistan, the Muslim League continued its false propaganda against its rival muslim politicians and political parties. No stone was left unturned for their character assassination. They went whole hog to prove the nationalist Muslims as the paid agents and captives of the Congress. Even their ex-communication from the fold of Islam was not considered unwarranted. Their sole crime was that they did not agree to the Muslim League's political philosophy aiming at the division of India. After the establishment of Pakistan, the charge sheet prepared and filed against the nationalist Muslims lengthened. The Muslim League rulers doubted their loyalty to the new country and called them traitors. These ill-fated people were denied, under the new dispensation, an opportunity to defend themselves, an opportunity which is even available to the ordinary criminals, as a constitutional and a legal right. These helpless souls languished in jails for years, unheard just because they had exercised their democratic right to express courageous opinion in opposition to the one held by the Muslim League. And for having exercised that democratic right they had to

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pay a heavy price. They were also charged that because of their politics, the Muslims of undivided India had to bear a heavy loss."

Although the book under review is mainly limited to the politics of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, yet, his politics being based upon nationalism, the book also throws light on the politics of the nationalist muslims, nationalist muslim parties and the elements having nationalist point of view (in undivided India). Their opinions, reactions and analysis, on the different formulae presented by the British rulers on the future of India have been explained, at length, in the book. This has truly mirrored the politics of the nationalist muslim elements and those of the Muslim League. Thus one comes to know as to whose politics was to the overall advantage of the Muslims of undivided India and whose adamant attitude, lack of perspicacity and confused state of mind resulted in a loss to the Muslims of the whole country. Moreover, how far were the "Hindu leadership" and the British rulers, sincere and serious to keep India united? A close study of history brings to light the fact that in India, the nationalist Muslims were the only element which continued its sincere efforts with perseverance to keep India undivided and together till the end, and to see it free.

This book has broken new ground on the subject of the division of India. Facts and events mentioned in the book never received the due and the deserved attention for partisan sentiments. Due to political considerations of the powers that be, the historians (in Pakistan) were afraid of broaching the subject. To do justice to the subject, I had to immerse myself in this historic research." The preface continues, "Most of the Muslim historians and analysts in this Islamic country have, under the pressure of Pakistan's political atmosphere, not felt ashamed to debase their pen. The irony is that the real actors of history have either been totally forgotten or if any reference to them became inescapable, then they receive only a passing mention." The author goes on to say, "Let these historians remember that both history as well as the truth, each has a tongue of its own."

The author of the book on the Maulana's life and work has divided it in three parts:

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1. To arouse religious and political awareness among the Muslims.
2. Hindu – Muslim unity, and
3. Country's freedom.

The author has quoted authenticated documents extensively to prove his point that Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy had arrived in India with a clear mind and determination to push his scheme through to divide India, keeping the larger interests of Britain in view. He has quoted Mountbatten assuring the Congress leadership that, "Administratively, Pakistan would not be a permanent structure but only a tin-shed hut or a tent – we are only pitching a tent," meaning thereby that the establishment of Pakistan was only temporary so the Congress should accept it for the time being, because this temporary arrangement would end soon.

According to the author, Mr Qureshi, "It is surprising that even before Mountbatten's arrival in India, Jinnah had also veered around to this view point. He also had no faith in the viability of Pakistan because it would have no strength to meet the challenge of any powerful invader single-handedly". And according to Jinnah, "it would have to seek aid from outside." Therefore, he had said, "I think that Pakistan and India can eventually reunite and it is my hope and belief that they would unite."

Describing the stages through which Muslim politics had developed in undivided India, the author says:

A. In the beginning Mr. Jinnah, Allama Iqbal and Maulana Azad along with other nationalist muslims, while seeking to safeguard the distinct identity and religious freedom of the Muslims, nonetheless, wanted to live at peace with the other communities.
B. Allama Iqbal and Maulana Azad and other nationalist Muslims desired solutions to India's problems by peaceful means, till the end.
C. From 23 March, 1940, (when the Pakistan resolution was adopted at Lahore) there was a fundamental change in the Muslim League policies, and the League started the politics of hate and contempt against the nationalist muslims. Muslim League aroused the religious passions

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of the Muslims and generated hatred in the hearts of the Muslims against the Hindus and the Sikhs. There was absolutely no justification for announcing the Direct Action Day 16 August 1946, which resulted in the Great Calcutta Killings. The British rulers deliberately escalated tension in the atmosphere. This was a prelude to the end result of partition and the blood bath.

The Muslim League had raised great hopes among the Muslims of united India that West Pakistan would include the whole of Punjab. During those fateful days, darkened by the smoky atmosphere (thousands of houses were burning all over Punjab) a great nationalist Muslim and the undisputed leader of the Ahrar movement, Atta Ullah Shah Bukhari thundered in a huge rally:

Listen and remember:

"If partition takes place, Amritsar will fall in India and Pakistan would be gradually controlled by those who even today depend upon the British rule. This (Pakistan) would be a paradise for the rich". Bukhari continued, "In future, no problem would be solved in a democratic way. Today, at the command of the English, you (Hindu, Muslims and the Sikhs) are fighting with swords and sticks, tomorrow (when new states are established) you will fight with guns and cannons. Who will be responsible for all that?" he asked.

The book also contains the following press statement of Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, "The fact is that the majority among the present leaders of the Muslim League constitutes those who were assisting the British Govt. against their own nation."

The author of the book Mr. Qureshi further records. "The historic session of the All India Muslim League was held in 1940, at Lahore, under the presidentship of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Skirting the question of an Indian federation, the session adopted a resolution later on called the Pakistan Resolution. The British Govt. was the happiest on this development as they had found an effective instrument in the Muslim League to advance their own interests.

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When the British Govt. called for elections in1946 to know the representative character of each party, the Muslim League fire-brands declared that the elections were a *jehad* between *Kufr* and Islam and the British authorities helped the Muslim League to the best of their abilities. At this Maulana Abul Kalam Azad issued a press statement wherein he said, "All over India the British officers were extending a helping hand to the Muslim League. It is beyond comprehension that the servants of an alien Govt. were prompted to help the League only to help Islam or bring benefit to the Muslim."

In another statement the Maulana explained at length the unfair practices indulged in and the violent incidents taking place during the elections. "The actions of the League, the attitude of the British govt. officials and their actions reduced the elections to a farce. The League patronised the illiterate *peers* and *mullahs* and threatened those voting against the League with God's retribution. The League presented the elections as a *jehad* and aroused the worst religious passions. The illiterate and the semiliterate *mullahs* could not even read a line of Arabic and were totally ignorant of Islam's religious literature. In order to arouse the religious passions on a large scale, the Muslim League sought their help and turned the elections into a *jehad*. *Fatwas* were issued denouncing the non-league nationalist muslim candidates as *kafirs* and the *murtads*. League propaganda also declared that the victory of the nationalist muslims would spell doom for Islam in India. To vote for them is a vote against Islam and an invitation to permanent slavery."

Such were the conditions created by the British-Muslim League Axis. The British toady and fire brand Muslim League leader, Sir Feroze Khan Noon, who later on became a prime minister of Pakistan was threatening, "If the demand of Pakistan is not conceded then the fury of Changez and Halaku will visit again".

Till the last, Maulana Azad tried his best to keep India united, even under a loose federation divided into groups, as envisaged in the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Muslim League rejected this scheme, also.

On the announcement of 3 June 1947 Partition plan, Maulana said, "My worst apprehensions have come true.

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When I tried to understand the new attitude of the British, I came to the conclusion that the decision of the British govt. carries more consideration for the interests of Britain than those of India..... A state where the Muslim League is in power, can be kept in the British sphere of influence, permanently."

The author concludes: "The fact is that the deceit and treachery of the *firangi* politics turned India into a hell. Most of the acknowledged leaders of the Indian public opinion deliberately became captives of these harmful moves. Perhaps, they were no more able to lead more struggles, or may be, they had grown old.

"And ultimately, the last British Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten succeeded in dividing India".

I cannot speak about the total political literature produced in India since the partition but I may add with confidence that at least in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi or English, no such published work, as written by Mr. Qureshi which I have reviewed, has come to my notice. It is a unique attempt to expose British perfidy in dividing India as also to size up all the characters of the time, actors of the political stage.

I met Qureshi Sahib, the author during my stay in Lahore and congratulated him over his bold attempt to tell the truth.

(The book has been published by Takhleeqat", Akram Arcade, 29, Temple Road, Lahore)

Recent Political Publications in Pakistan

Among the books published in Lahore in the recent times, is the Urdu translation of the Congress Committee Report on the Martial Law of 1919, under the title *"Punjab me pehla Martial Law"*(First Martial Law in Punjab) (Congress Committee Report) by Lala Pandi Das. The report contains eyewitness accounts of the suppression, repression and humiliation practised by the British authorities, against the Indians, during those fateful days which by their sheer dimension proved a watershed in Indo-British relationship.

Pakistani advocate Mohammed Ashraf in his preface to the latest Urdu edition says: "The definition of Martial Law is that there is no law which means law of the jungle plus use of brute force. In the face of this force, morality, law and constitution carry no importance." Mr. Ashraf continues,

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"The agony of Martial Law can be felt only by those who cherish freedom. The people of the sub-continent, specially of Pakistan understand the term Martial Law very well."

"The Martial Law of 1919 was promulgated by the alien rulers. The portrayal of the humiliating treatment meted out to the people, by the compiler of the Report, Lala Pandi Das, has, in fact recorded history for posterity." Mr. Ashraf adds, "I well understand the agony of the Martial Law, because I, too, suffered under Martial Law. The year 1977 (when Gen. Zia-ul-Haq usurped power in Pakistan) had brought me innumerable difficulties."

"I am a votary of freedom", he continued, "and no votary of freedom and liberty accepts suppression and the repression of the Martial Law. Whenever I tried to speak out against the Martial Law, flogging and imprisonment became my lot". Concluding the preface of the book, Mr. Ashraf said, "Whosoever reads the book in India or Pakistan especially in Indian Punjab and Pakistani Punjab, would come to know as to whose sacrifices have resulted in the freedom of India and Pakistan."

The book has been published by the "Fiction House", 18, Mozang Road, Lahore.

*Another wonderful recent addition to the Pakistani political literature is the publication of *'Kahani Kafanchor Hukamrano Ki'* (The story of the ruthless robber rulers) by Mr. Abdul Hameed Chhapra. Chhapra is a seasoned journalist and a trade unionist of sterling qualities. *The book* is a collection of his articles published in different Pakistani journals. Chhapra, a veteran of many trade union battles, suffered long under the martial law regimes. However, courageous comrades like him running professional as well as trade union organisations from the Karachi Press Club, had succeeded in making its premises "out of bound" for any govt. functionary.

Presently Mr. Abdul Hameed Chhapra is the chairman of All Pakistan Newspaper Employees Confederation (APNEC) and president of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ).

In the introduction to the book, "*Kahani Kafanchor Hukamrano ki*", prominent personality Hasan Abdi, writes, "We are witnessing how the *jagirdars*, profiteers, unscrupulous

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traders, greedy politicians and corrupt administrators have brought Pakistan to this position. And we are suffering the calamity brought about by these elements. The serious most thing is our future..... An average man of modest means is keen to know as to what would happen to the country. Whether their children would also have to go through a hellish experience."

The introduction continues, "One of the reasons of the lethargy and failure of the governments (in Pakistan) is the weakness of the popular forces. If people unite and stand firm then the govt. would be compelled to act.... Recent events tell us that the newspapers, by exercising their power freely have exposed many a scandal in the administration, judiciary and other departments and have compelled the powers that be to change their style (of functioning). Now it is being openly said that had the press written freely during Gen. Yahya's time, the tragedy of East Pakistan's separation had not taken place. Today, again we are nearing the old times. It is time that we don't let history repeat itself."

In one of his articles in the book, Mr. Chhapra has commended the establishment of Press Council in India to help ensure freedom of press and has demanded the constitution of such a Council in Pakistan.

I first met Mr. Chhapra nineteen years ago, in December 1980, in the Karachi Press Club during my first visit to Pakistan 33 years after partition.

The book has been published by Pakistani Adab Publications, Karachi.

* *"Tareekh-E-Alam par ek nazar"*, i.e. Urdu translation of Jawaharlal Nehru's "Glimpses of the World History", is a welcome addition to the treasure house of Urdu publications in Pakistan. It also shows revival of interest in Nehru.

This book, an excellent production by any standard, has also been published by "Takhleeqat", Lahore.

• One more book published in Pakistan deserves mention here.

Poet and prominent social activist Dr. Khalid Javed Jan's collection *Zandan Me Hai Koi Diwana* includes his famous poem *baghi* (Rebel).

In the foreword, the author writes, 'It is my faith that there are only two religions and only two classes in the

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world, which are called "oppressors and the oppressed". Any man- made third division in the humankind is the creation of the oppressor classes. And their only aim is to breakup the unity and strength of the oppressed and make them weak and dependent.' His another poem *"Hindustani awwam ke nam"*, (To the People of India), written on the golden jubilee of Independence, carries a touching message and a stirring call to the oppressed people of both countries to join hands and erase every trace of hatred. Dr. Jan who suffered much during Zia military regime has dedicated his book to his wife Shaista Baluch. I spent a long evening with the family. A beautiful statue of *Murli Manohar*, Krishna playing the flute, stood on a corner table of the large sitting room in the house.

The book has been published by Al-Hamad Publications, Rana Chambers, IInd Floor (Chowk Purani Anarkali) Lake Road, Lahore.

* Another important recent publiclation is *'Mashriq ke azeem mufakkar"*, An Urdu translation of *The great thinkers of the East* by Mr., Evan P. McGrill. Its chapter on Hindustan includes introduction to Vedas, Upanishads, Mahatma Buddha, Mahavir, Bhagwat Gita, Krishna, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Kumaral Bhatt, Shankar, Ramanuj, Madhava, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Jawahralal Nehru.
* This book has also been published by Takhleeqat Publishers in Lahore.
* Yet another book "*Khuli Ankhe*" (Open Eyes) by Ajmal Ghalib of Khairpur Tamewali (Dist. Bahawalpur) is a book of stories. The author, feeling awfully disgusted with the present dispensation, has made a will in his foreword that, on his death, his dead body be taken to Bombay and cremated there at the Chandanwadi crematorium.
* Another book "*Mera Shahar Lahore,*" (My city Lahore), by Yunus Adeeb was sent to me by a trade unionist friend Yusuf Baloch.

The book is a portrayal of the life of the citizens, living in the lanes and by-lanes of the ancient town Lahore. It records the existence of perfect communal harmony amongst the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs before the slogan of Pakistan

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rent the air. The book also details the celebrations of the common fairs and festivals where great bonhomie used to be witnessed.

Yunus remembers some prominent figures of the old town in pre-partition days. The list is headed by the legendary Congress leader Kedarnath Sehgal, an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy case, who wore black clothes on the death of Tilak and vowed to remain in black, till freedom was won. He had spent years and years in British jails. Alas! After partition when Sehgal Sahib came to Delhi, as a refugee, he refused to discard the black robes and when asked the reason for the same, would retort "Is this what you call freedom"?

The legendary leader's family lived in the Paparmandi area of Lahore which was burnt down during the riots.

I met the author of the book along with Dr. Jan at his residence.

The book has been published by Saghar Academy, Post Box 1947, Lahore.

Yunus Adeeb also presented me his other book '*Dastan-e-Saghar*' (The story of Saghar). Saghar, the born poet, had migrated to Lahore from Amritsar at a young age, at the time of partition.

Before the partition in 1947, Saghar used to visit Lahore almost every Sunday to lend colour to one or the other cultural evening, organised in the form of *mushaira* (poetic symposium). He was well-dressed, well groomed and never short of money.

Pakistan changed everything. He came to Pakistan, dreaming to live in an ideal society, but all those dreams were shattered. He grew bitter.

After the first army rule, in Pakistan, he pinned high hopes on Bhutto to deliver the people of injustices. Again, the hopes were dashed to the ground. More and more, he withdrew himself from society. Literally without a shelter, he would roam about the streets. He was considered a *darvesh*.

Saghar died unwept, unsung and unhonoured. However, his friends and admirers everywhere, when they heard of his demise, considered his departure from the scene as their personal loss. Now, every year, his death anniversary is being observed by his friends and admirers.

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The book has been published by the Saghar Academy, Lahore.

• Another valuable addition to the new political Urdu literature in Pakistan is the publication of the translation of Will Durant's "Story of Civilisation" Vol.1" "Our oriental Heritage", under the title "*Tareekhh, Tehzib, Tamaddan, Philosophy– Hindustan*". The readers will find it interesting to know that when the British Imperialists acquired the services of the notorious American lady Ketharine Mayo to malign India, Gandhi and the whole nationalist movement and she wrote "Mother India", described by Gandhi, as a gutter inspector's, report, two persons felt impelled to cross swords with the lady. One an Indian, K.L. Gauba who wrote "Uncle Sam" portraying the degenerate American life and the other was William James Durant, the American, who wrote the book mentioned above. Will Durant traced the history of India since Mohanjodaro civilisation and concluded that the curses and miseries visiting India of the present era, are the direct result of the British rule.

The book opens with the saying of Swami Vivekanand that "Service to humanity is service rendered to the Almighty". This book has also been published by 'Takhleeqat', Lahore. I met Mr. Liaqat Ali, the publisher and congratulated him for his remarkable contribution to political literature in Pakistan.

I was also presented a number of books written by Qamar Yourish, a writer who belongs to the working class and writes for the working class. His book '*Shahi qila se jail tak*," describes his life in the Lahore Fort, infamous for its torture chambers. He has mentioned the names of the communist and leftist workers who were incarcerated in those chambers after partition i.e. in Pakistan and whose names are scribbled on the walls. Among them are Abdullah Malik, Mirza Mohammad Ibrahim, Hasan Abdi, Hamid Akhtar, Comrade Lal Khan Shamshir, Ashraf Malik, Sabte-e-Hassan, Master Sher Ali, Faiz Ahmed *Faiz*, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, C.R. Aslam, Major Ishaq Mahammad, Zafar Afghani, Eric Spreen, Hasan Tahir, Subo Gianchandrani and Mohd., Afzal Khan.

Qamar Yourish's other book "*Jallianwala Bagh*' portraits the life of Amritsar before partition, when communal amity reigned. He was young when partition took place and he had

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to migrate to Lahore. He first found a job in the Moghalpura Loco Workshop and gradually became a confirmed trade unionist. He started writing on the problems of the working class. Faiz Ahmed Faiz spoke highly of one of his books "*Yaaraan-e-Maikada*".

Before I conclude the series of articles on my visit to Pakistan in February-March 1999 (Karachi and Lahore), I would like to stress the need for progressive people in India to take note of the new trend in the thinking of certain sections of intellectuals and others in Pakistan.

15/5/2016
Wazir Ram Pandit
Head Master School
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